



GOVERNMENT INTERVENTION IN THE MUSLIM COMMUNITY

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A report from
Hizb ut-Tahrir
Australia

GOVERNMENT INTERVENTION
IN THE
MUSLIM COMMUNITY

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Hizb ut-Tahrir is a global Islamic political party established in 1953 under the leadership of its founder - the honourable scholar, thinker, author, and judge in the Court of Appeals in Jerusalem - Taqiuddin an-Nabhani. The current leader of the party is the erudite scholar 'Ata ibn Khaleel Abu Rashta.

The objective of Hizb ut-Tahrir is the resumption of the Islamic way of life, manifested through the return to Islam by Muslims individually, and the re-establishment of the Islamic Caliphate (Khilafah) in the Muslim world collectively. The Caliphate will be an independent state having an elected and accountable ruler, an independent judiciary, political parties, the rule of law and equitable rights for all citizens regardless of race, religion, gender or ethnicity.

The current situation in the Muslim world is a lamentable one, with deeply embedded corruption, open oppression, injustice, no accountability, disregard for the rule of law and widespread discrimination. These are real problems which affect hundreds of millions of people every day, and these are problems which Hizb ut-Tahrir is working to change.

Hizb ut-Tahrir's roots in Australia stretch back to the early 1990s. It has ever since been highly active within the Muslim community on the grassroots level, with great success in the spreading of its ideas of Islamic political activism and Islamic revivalism. Our work in Australia is aimed at supporting the global effort to re-establish the Caliphate in the Muslim world, whilst also projecting a positive image of Islam in the West.

The reason we operate in the West, despite our primary goal being relevant to the Muslim World, is two-fold. One, in a globalised world any serious political work cannot be bound by geography. Two, the reality of the intimate role western governments play in the politics of the Muslim world means they form a central part of the struggle for Islam there. Indeed, it is western governments, in their capacity as the patrons of the regimes that rule in the Muslim world, that are the major obstacle to positive change there.

Further, with growing numbers of Muslims living in the West, western governments have brought the struggle home by adopting similar agendas locally. This includes the attempt to re-construct Islam on the model of the Christian reformation by promoting a secular, apolitical, so called 'moderate' version of Islam. They have sought to force the Muslims to 'integrate' by abandoning Islamic values and ideals, and accepting Western secular liberal values instead.

Thus, in Australia, as in other Western nations, our work with the Muslim community is focused on directing Muslims to resist the dilution of their Islam and, conversely, to make a positive contribution to society based upon the preservation of their Islamic identity. We reject both integration and isolation, and advocate positive interaction for Muslims in society based solely upon Islam. We believe the Muslim community, with its transcendent Islamic values and culture, can present itself as a sublime model of tranquillity, prosperity and positivity.

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Foreword

Amongst the requisite tasks of any Islamic political party are the exposition of plans and agendas against the Muslim ummah, the raising of awareness amongst her about these, and the advocacy of appropriate responses and adoption of her interests with respect to these.

It is well-known that the Australian Government's counter-terrorism policy post-9/11 primarily targets Muslims. Following the London bombings of 2005 a greater focus on the 'home-grown' terrorism phenomenon brought Muslims living in Australia into the firing line more sharply. Since then, the Australian Government has developed and implemented a broad range of counter-terrorism policies that target the Muslim community.

It is also well-known that much of the counter-terrorism agenda of the Australian Government, as with that of its allies in the US and UK, is politicised. It is as more a political agenda than a security one.

Notwithstanding these well-known realities, there has to date been no comprehensive assessment of the Government's counter-terrorism policy by Muslims in their capacity as Muslims, on the Islamic basis and with the interests of the Muslim community in mind. Rather, Muslim response has ranged from ad hoc or partial critique at best to wholesale uncritical acceptance at worst.

This report, issued by Hizb ut-Tahrir Australia, seeks to fill this gap by presenting for the Muslim community, first and foremost, an assessment of the Australian Government's counter-terrorism policy and how it targets the Muslim community in particular. We seek thereby to alert the community – its leaders, imams, activists, youth and all those in positions of responsibility in particular – to what has become the Government's key pillar in its agenda against Islam and Muslims, and to impress on them the need to respond to this in the manner demanded by Islam.

We welcome feedback on the contents of this report and hope that it will spur a debate amongst the Muslim community regarding one of the biggest challenges that faces us today.

All praise for what is good in this report is for Allah, whom we ask to bless this effort, make it purely for his sake, and to make it of abundant benefit to the community.

{يُرِيدُونَ لِيُطْفِئُوا نُورَ اللَّهِ بِأَفْوَاهِهِمْ وَاللَّهُ مُتِمُّ نُورِهِ وَلَوْ كَرِهَ الْكَافِرُونَ}

"They wish to extinguish the light of Allah with their mouths but Allah will complete his light, even if the disbelievers detest it." [al-Saff: 8]



Uthman Badar

Head of the Media Office

Hizb ut-Tahrir Australia

14 November 2013 CE

11 Muharram 1435 AH

Executive Summary

Context

When the Berlin Wall fell, western policymakers raised their heads to peer beyond the Cold War paradigm whose chapter had closed. What they saw was a new 'threat', beyond the Mediterranean as Margaret Thatcher referred to it, in a form of Islamic revivalism.

In the following two decades, the struggle crystallised. At present, it is as clear as ever, taking place first and foremost in the Muslim World, but also having a clear frontier here in the West.

In the Muslim world the battle is being fought between Muslims on the one hand and western governments on the other. Muslims seek to shape their political destiny on the basis of Islam. Western governments, through their political agents, seek to maintain the status quo of repressive secular rule, whether of monarchical, dictatorial or democratic flavour.

As for the local western front, two factors brought the struggle home to western governments. One was their own intimate role in the politics of the Muslim world. The other was the increasing numbers of Muslims residing in the West, who, instead of integrating into western culture, were maintaining a strong connection to their own values and ideals.

Policymakers in the West thus adopted the same agenda here, of attempting to force integration by ruing Muslims away from Islam as it is – a creed political as much as it is spiritual.

The vast majority of Muslims in Australia, and the in West more broadly, want nothing more than to live their lives peacefully, according to their beliefs and values. They loathe the brutal colonial foreign policy towards Islam and Muslims around the world undertaken by western governments, but are content to maintain good relations with their non-Muslim colleagues and neighbours. They firmly believe that violent attacks on civilians like what we witnessed on 9/11 and 7/7 are prohibited in Islam, but are equally frustrated that labels of 'terrorism' are attached to those who legitimately resist violent military occupation whether in Palestine, Iraq, Afghanistan or Kashmir.

They try to live their lives according to Islamic values without imposing these values on others, only to see these same values constantly ridiculed and maligned. In the post-9/11 West it is open season to vilify Islam, its beliefs and noble values. If it's not the face veil that becomes a security issue overnight in Australia, it's the minarets that frighten Switzerland. If it's not freedom of expression making Danish 'artists' itch to insult the Prophet of Islam, peace be upon him, it's the Muslim woman's dress code threatening three hundred years of French secularism.

These anti-Muslim policies and propaganda have been established for distinct yet related reasons.

Firstly, there was a genuine concern that the Islamic revival in the Muslim world would challenge the hegemony of the United States and her allies. There are huge pressures in the Muslim world for a change away from the current despots and tyrants – manifest most poignantly in the recent uprisings – who serve only their own personal interests and those of their western sponsors. A growing number of people yearn to replace these current oppressive models, whether democratic, dictatorial or enforced through occupation,

with Islam. Similarly, Muslims in the West have also voiced the desire for real change. As a consequence, the 'Muslim Diaspora' has become the front line of a global ideological struggle.

Secondly, there have been concerns that years of soft policies have failed to win the submissive loyalty of Muslims to the state, and have left them unconvinced of by secular liberal values. This led to a process of coercion of the Muslim community, indicating a lack of confidence in the ability of secular values to win the hearts and convince the minds of Muslims.

Thirdly, regardless of how productive and decent Muslim citizens are in the community, successive governments have had anxieties about them maintaining ties with a global Muslim *ummah* and standing with Muslims in places like Iraq and Afghanistan instead of endorsing western military policy.

Following the attacks in New York and Washington in September 2001, terrorism became the new enemy of the West against which a war was waged, led by the United States. Waging a war against a loosely and politically-defined tactic allowed for great flexibility in dealing with those deemed problematic. This happened to be Muslims – primarily those in the Muslim world but also, by extension, those living in the West. Thus efforts to integrate Muslims were subsumed and accelerated under the claimed fight against terrorism.

The 'counter-terrorism' policy of the Australian Government, as with that of leading western nations such as the US and UK, finds its place in this broader context. The War on Terror as a war on Islam is discussed in chapters one and two.

Policy

The overall counter-terrorism policy of the Australian Government draws on both 'hard-power' and 'soft-power' measures.

Hard-power strategies include traditional military, intelligence & law enforcement measures used against those who engage or plan to engage in violence acts. This is done through legislation in the form of tough anti-terrorism laws, stricter policing, surveillance by intelligence agencies and physical security measures.

Soft-power strategies, implemented under the rubric of 'counter-violent extremism' include ideological, political and social measures designed to challenge the 'radical' Islamic ideology thought to be behind the resort to violence through attack and critique of 'radical Islam' and the promotion of 'moderate Islam'. It also includes the facilitation of integration of Muslims in the longer-term through promotion of state-sanctioned values through education and civil society, a tougher conception of citizenship tied to the adoption of these values, and various social initiatives wherein these values are promoted.

Importantly, the Muslim community itself is sought to be used to implement counter-violent extremism strategies. Those deemed 'moderate' are promoted and funded to challenge those deemed 'radical'.

Thus, counter violent extremism is implemented via various means and with various objectives, such as:

- Sustained attempts to integrate Muslims by impressing on them fundamental secular liberal values whilst allowing cultural and personal religious differences.
- Sponsoring and promoting a state-sanctioned version of Islam – 'moderate Islam': a secular, politically-

impotent, localised version of Islam.

- Polarisation of the community into ‘moderates’ and ‘extremists’ with the former being co-opting to assist the government in countering the latter.
- Purposeful targeting of Imams and other community leaders with the aim of keeping them in line with the government agenda for Muslims getting them to lead the work of countering ‘radical Islam’ and the radical Muslims in the community.
- Purposeful targeting of Muslim youth, through schools, universities and community sports and cultural activities, in an attempt to mould a new generation of ‘Australia Muslims’ who adopt ‘Australian values’ and practice ‘moderate Islam’.
- Provision of grants for community organisations to implement ‘counter violent-extremism’ projects through leadership programs, workshops, sports and cultural activities.
- ‘Engagement’ with the community by police and bureaucrats to sell the government’s policy, and justify it, and the recruitment and use of Muslims for this purpose.

These policies have been detailed in this report under the thematically-arranged sections of chapter three. Government policy documents and articulations are used to show what the policymakers seek from these policies and how they target Muslims. A detailed outline of how the overall counter-terrorism policy has developed from 2001 till present is provided in appendix one.

Narrative

This policy is informed by a particular narrative about terrorism adopted by western governments across the board, in which ‘terrorism’ is basically Muslims attacking western interests caused by extreme interpretations of Islam by ‘radicals’ who exploit ‘perceived’ grievances about western actions in Muslim lands. In turn, the solution is military attacks against terrorists and a broader ideological struggle against ‘radical Islam’.

Further, ‘moderate’ Muslims are to assume responsibility for dealing with the problem because it is rooted in their community. They need to prove their loyalties to the states in which they live by proving that they are not a fifth column, substantiate their fidelity (and basic humanity) by continuously affirming that they do not support terrorism, condemn the radicals, and lead the work, backed and funded by government, of countering ‘radical Islam’ with ‘moderate Islam’.

This narrative is deeply flawed.

One, it relies on a politicised definition of terrorism whereby violence for political or ideological ends from Muslims comes under the definition but the same from western states does not. Two, it ignores or underplays the role of western foreign policy as a root cause of terrorism, instead sourcing the problem in Islam itself. Third, it presents western states as bastions of freedom and justice fighting terrorism, whereas humanity has seen no worse terrorism in our time than that perpetrated by these very states. They are responsible for more death and destruction than anyone else, and thus are in no position to be genuinely countering terrorism.

Western governments (and media) have followed the flawed logic that the adherence by Muslims to Islam is directly proportional to the risk they pose to the safety and security of people in the West – in effect tying the issues of loyalty, citizenship and identity with that of terrorism.

The Australian Government’s defines ‘terrorism’ as, “use of violence by groups or individuals pursuing political

objectives” and it defines ‘violent extremism’ as, “the use or support of violence to achieve ideological, religious or political goals”. Evidently, both these terms, by these very definitions, apply to the actions of the Australian Government abroad, such as in participation in the invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan.

Appreciating this, it is realised that the counter-terrorism policy of western states, the Australian Government being no exception, is not a genuine fight against terrorism. It is rather an agenda which takes terrorism as a pretext to pursue the political, ideological and economic interests of these states. Interventionist and brutal foreign policy is characterised as a necessary solution instead of a fundamental problem and thus perpetuated. The ideas that oppose and challenge secular liberalism are characterised as extreme and radical and thus challenged in the most insidious of ways by dividing and polarising the communities from which these ideas emanate.

Attack on Islam

It is part of the policy to portray counter-terrorism efforts as benign and bona-fide efforts against terrorism. Australian leaders have repeatedly made the claim that the war on terror is not a war on Islam, as have western leaders more broadly. However, the truth is revealed by the actions the policy mandates and implements, not by the words used to sell it.

Various aspects of Australia’s counter-terrorism policy comprise direct attacks on Islam and objectives that target it.

On the ideological front, the work to counter extremism targets many Islamic ideals, beliefs and practices. Although the target is said to be ‘radical’ Islam and although the ‘Australian values’ said to be promoted are at times expressed in supposedly neutral language, such as equality and tolerance, they in fact target Islamic positions deemed to be discriminatory, intolerant or extreme. Using subjective labels such as ‘extreme’, ‘radical’ and ‘moderate’ allows for the sought characterisation of something as desirable or undesirable and for the covering of the actual intent which is to target Islam.

This counter extremism work, which adopts and promotes ‘moderate Islam’, expressly promotes secularism, democracy, and liberal values and seeks an ‘enlightenment’ in Islam on the model of Christianity. The sought outcome is a secular, politically impotent, localised version of Islam: an ‘Australian Islam’ for ‘Australian Muslims’. This point is demonstrated in detail in sections V and VI of chapter three.

On the political front, one of the undisputed objectives of the counter-terrorism policies implemented in the Muslim world as part of foreign policy is to prevent the establishment of the Islamic state. Secular forces, regardless of how repressive or corrupt, are supported by the Australian Government, against those working for the establishment of Islam in the Muslim world.

Response

Given the above reality of Australia’s counter-terrorism policy, how should the Muslim community respond? A number of aspects are important.

We must understand and expose the counter-terrorism policy of the Government for what it is, challenge and critique it, along with the flawed narrative that underpins it, and propagate a counter-narrative reflective of the truth. We need to adopt independent agenda based on independently-identified priorities instead of

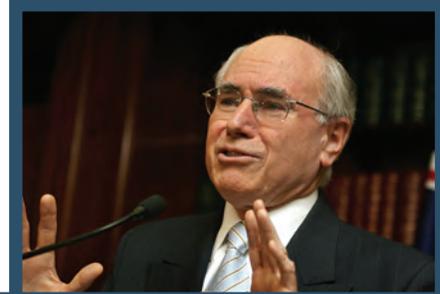
falling in line with the Government's agenda. Further, we should not take part in any of the Government's counter-terrorism programs and initiatives. Doing so legitimises the Government's agenda and does not allow for a genuine exposition and critique thereof.

We need to establish and maintain the independence of community institutions, such as mosques, centres, organisations and Imams' bodies, from government control or influence to the extent possible. We also need to adopt more thought-out, confident and assertive approaches towards various aspects of state interaction with Muslims such as that of ASIO and the AFP.

Importantly, we must give utmost attention to the purity and clarity of Islamic values, in contradistinction to secular liberal values; their being known and taught in the community, and instilled in the youth in particular.

These recommendations, amongst others, are elaborated and explained in more detail in the chapter four.

History teaches us that the tactics of Capitalist states, and the corporate wealth they represent, may change; but since the days of empire their aims have remained the same – to maximise their own power and wealth at the expense of all else. Currently, they see the independent and liberating force of Islam as the biggest threat to their hegemony. This represents a major challenge for Muslims, who need to understand the policies of western states for what they are and respond appropriately.



CHAPTER 1

SETTING THE GLOBAL CONTEXT: THE POST-9/11 WAR ON ISLAM

The events of September 11, 2001 marked a new phase in the international spotlight on terrorism. The attacks were portrayed as a strike at the very heart of the bastion of western freedom, democracy and capitalism by bringing down the Twin Towers, symbols of the western way of life and the claimed success thereof. Just as the towers fell, the curtains rose on the 'War on Terror'. The world was led to believe, in classic Hollywood tradition, that the great evil of our times had presented itself and it was time for the gallant saviours of humanity, the 'free world', led by the United States, to rescue us all.

In reality, what commenced with the War on Terror was in fact a war on Islam: an attack on Islam politically and ideologically – politically, through the acceleration of policies to prevent the emergence of any Islamic polity in the Muslim world and ideologically, through attacking all aspects of Islam which are not in accordance with secular liberal ideals. Muslims felt the full force of this new age "crusade", with a new era of war, invasion, open oppression, attacks, demonisation, discrimination and hostility against all things Islamic.

President Bush made clear, with his announcement of the War on Terror in his famous address to a joint session of Congress, the nature of the conflict that the US administration had decided to wage:

"Our response involves far more than instant retaliation and isolated strikes. Americans should not expect one battle but a lengthy campaign, unlike any other we have ever seen. It may include dramatic strikes, visible on TV, and covert operations, secret even in success. We will starve terrorists of funding, turn them one against another, drive them from place to place, until there is no refuge or no rest. And we will pursue nations that provide aid or safe haven to terrorism. Every nation, in every region, now has a decision to make. Either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists."¹

This war, an undefined conflict with an undefined enemy and unlimited timeframe, allowed for the United States to act as it pleased.

There has been consistent affirmation from the onset that the War on Terror is, at its heart, an ideological war. It is no conventional battle – it is a drawn out war that seeks to destroy an oppositional ideology, namely Islam. President Bush on many occasions accentuated the ideological nature of the war. In a press conference in October 2006 he said,

"This is the real challenge of the 21st century. I like to tell people we're in an ideological struggle. And it's a struggle between extremists and radicals and people of moderation who want to simply live a peaceful life."²

In a speech about the Iraq war in 2007 he said,

"The challenge playing out across the broader Middle East is more than a military conflict. It is the decisive ideological struggle of our time. On one side are those who believe in freedom and moderation. On the other side are extremists who kill the innocent, and have declared their intention to destroy our way of life."³

It is notable that the 'terrorists', 'radicals', 'extremists', 'fundamentalists' and other such terms that are consistently mentioned, in essence, all refer to the same reality – anyone or anything that opposes the interests of the United States. In a speech to the National Endowment for Democracy in 2005, George Bush

¹ Bush, G.W. *Address to a Joint Session of Congress*, US Capitol Washington, 20 Sep 2001: <http://1.usa.gov/bTCM2J>

² Bush, G.W. *The United States & North Korea: Rose Garden Press Conference*, Washington DC, 11 Oct 2006: <http://www.presidentialrhetoric.com/speeches/10.11.06.html>

³ Bush, G.W. *President Bush Addresses Nation on Iraq War*, The Washington Post, 10 Jan 2007: <http://wapo.st/bLP6wa>

outlined who the 'radicals' are:

"We know the vision of the radicals because they've openly stated it -- in videos, and audiotapes, and letters, and declarations, and websites. First, these extremists want to end American and Western influence in the broader Middle East, because we stand for democracy and peace, and stand in the way of their ambitions...Second, the militant network wants to use the vacuum created by an American retreat to gain control of a country, a base from which to launch attacks and conduct their war against non-radical Muslim governments. Over the past few decades, radicals have specifically targeted Egypt, and Saudi Arabia, and Pakistan, and Jordan for potential takeover...Third, the militants believe that controlling one country will rally the Muslim masses, enabling them to overthrow all moderate governments in the region, and establish a radical Islamic empire that spans from Spain to Indonesia."⁴

This idea of preventing the establishment of the *Khilafah* [Caliphate] is also emphasised. George Bush explicated noted this on numerous occasions during his presidency:

"The stakes couldn't be any higher, as I said earlier, in the world in which we live. There are extreme elements that use religion to achieve objectives. And they want us to leave. And they want to topple government. They want to extend an ideological caliphate that has no concept of liberty inherent in their beliefs."⁵

"They hope to establish a violent political utopia across the Middle East, which they call caliphate, where all would be ruled according to their hateful ideology...This caliphate would be a totalitarian Islamic empire encompassing all current and former Muslim lands, stretching from Europe to North Africa, the Middle East and Southeast Asia."⁶

"The militants believe that controlling one country will rally the Muslim masses, enabling them to overthrow all moderate governments in the region and establish a radical Islamic empire that spans from Spain to Indonesia."⁷

Other senior US officials said the same. Dick Cheney, then Vice President, described the objectives of the "enemy" in September 2004 as,

"They talk about wanting to re-establish what you could refer to as the seventh-century caliphate" to be "governed by Sharia law, the most rigid interpretation of the Koran [sic]."⁸

Donald Rumsfeld, then Secretary of Defense, in a speech at the 42nd *Munich Conference on Security Policy* in February 2006 said,

"According to their own words, they seek to take over governments from North Africa to Southeast Asia and to re-establish a caliphate they hope, one day, will include every continent. They have designed and distributed a map where national borders are erased and replaced by a global extremist Islamic empire."⁹

It should be clear then that the manifestation of an entity that opposes the interests and objectives of the United States is what is being fought. We see that whilst the illegitimate despotic and autocratic governments in the Muslim world, such as those in Egypt (under Mubarak at the time), Saudi Arabia and Pakistan (under Musharraf at the time), are afforded legitimacy and given the stamp of approval as "non-radical Muslim governments", the call and work for the *Khilafah* is criminalised and fought.

There is also no disputing the global nature of the War on Terror. It is a war that has pit an alliance of

⁴ Bush, G.W. *Speech at the National Endowment for Democracy*, Washington DC, 6 Oct 2005: <http://bit.ly/1aoOPGj>

⁵ Note 2

⁶ Bush, G.W. *Iran & The War on Terror: Address to the Address to the Military Officers Association of America*, Washington DC, 5 Sep 2006: <http://www.presidentialrhetoric.com/speeches/09.05.06.html>

⁷ Note 4

⁸ Bumiller, E. *21st-Century Warnings of Threat Rooted in the 7th*, The New York Times, 12 Dec 2005: <http://nyti.ms/16ygrll>

⁹ Rumsfeld, D.H. *Speech at the 42nd Munich Conference on Security Policy*, Munich, 4 Feb 2006: <http://bit.ly/1abzc1N>

western nations not against other nations, but against disparate networks they deem “terrorist” and, more strategically and importantly, against an idea, a vision and an aspiration – the idea and aspiration that Muslims should have their political destiny in their own hands, manifest through Islam itself.

The United Kingdom is also a key part of this global effort. Tony Blair, as British Prime Minister, was a staunch ally of the Bush administration and supported the United States in word and deed in the War on Terror.

Indeed, the likes of President Bush’s comments noted above were preceded by Tony Blair in the immediate aftermath of the July 7 attacks in London. At a press conference on 16th July 2005, he said,

“What we are confronting here is an evil ideology...a global struggle and it is a battle of ideas, hearts and minds, both within Islam and outside it...a battle not just about the terrorist methods but their views. Not just their barbaric acts, but their barbaric ideas.”

Among the “barbaric ideas” of this “evil ideology” he counted,

“[they] demand the elimination of Israel; the withdrawal of all Westerners from Muslim countries, irrespective of the wishes of people and government; the establishment of effectively Taleban states and Sharia law in the Arab world en route to one caliphate of all Muslim nations.”¹⁰

In a speech to the Foreign Policy Centre in London in March 2006, he explained further,

“This terrorism will not be defeated until its ideas, the poison that warps the minds of its adherents, are confronted, head-on, in their essence, at their core. By this I don’t mean telling them terrorism is wrong. I mean telling them their attitude to America is absurd; their concept of governance pre-feudal; their positions on women and other faiths, reactionary and regressive...[t]he only way to win is: to recognise this phenomenon is a global ideology; to see all areas, in which it operates, as linked; and to defeat it by values and ideas set in opposition to those of the terrorists.”¹¹

In October 2005, then British Home Secretary, Charles Clarke, in a speech to the Heritage Foundation said,

“What drives these people on is ideas. And, unlike the liberation movements of the post-World War II era, these are not political ideas like national independence from colonial rule, or equality for all citizens without regard for race or creed, or freedom of expression without totalitarian repression. Such ambitions are, at least in principle, negotiable and in many cases have actually been negotiated. However, there can be no negotiation about the re-creation of the Caliphate; there can be no negotiation about the imposition of Sharia law...These values are fundamental to our civilization and are simply not up for negotiation.”¹²

Thus we see the common conception of those who led the War on Terror as a global ideological struggle against ideas and aspirations deemed unacceptable. Although the targeted ideas are couched in negative and at times distorted terms, it is clear to see that they include fundamental ideas of Islam: the implementation of *Shariah*, the establishment of the *Khilafah*, the removal of the illegitimate and corrupt regimes in the Muslim world, and the repulsion of invading forces, such as western troops, and entities, such as ‘Israel’, from the Muslim world. More generally, all ideas and aspects of Islam not in line with secular liberal ideals form part of the target. Hence, it is, quite clearly, a war on Islam.

¹⁰ Blair, T. *Prime Minister Tony Blair’s speech on the London bombings*, Labour Party National Conference, 16 Jul 2005: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/4689363.stm

¹¹ Blair, T. *Not a Clash Between Civilisations, But a Clash About Civilisation*, The Foreign Policy Centre, 21 Mar 2006: <http://fpc.org.uk/events/past/clash-about-civilisation>

¹² Clarke, C. *Contesting the Threat of Terrorism*, The Heritage Foundation, 21 Oct 2005: <http://herit.ag/nBTOzo>



CHAPTER 2

AUSTRALIA'S ROLE IN THE POST-9/11 WAR ON ISLAM

Australian policymakers have proceeded along essentially the same lines as their counterparts in the US and Europe, with essentially the same reasons and motivations. For them, too, the War on Terror, which they rushed to join and have been a part of ever since, is a global war, having both military and ideological dimensions, against 'terrorism' perpetuated by Muslims. They seek to target not just those who undertake violent attacks but also the ideas they deem to be the cause of this, many of which of fundamental Islamic ideas.

This is noted very clearly in policy articulations, from both sides of politics, throughout the last decade.

The 2004 Terrorism White Paper¹³ characterised the terrorist threat as a war of values,

"They feel threatened by our values and the place we take in the world. Our international alliances and our robust foreign policy are opportunistically invoked in the name of their 'war'. Our conspicuous example of economic and social prosperity is deemed a threat to their cause. We hear our values and social fabric attacked...Our nation's values and social fabric are also a potential casualty. They cannot be protected by physical barriers. Our democratic values and our open, pluralistic society are anathema to the transnational extremist-Muslim terrorist." (p. xi-xii)

"Open and pluralist societies like ours are now confronted in fundamental ways. These terrorists seek to undermine our security and prosperity. They feel threatened by the values and aspirations that make us an open, tolerant and creative country with a confident future." (p. 2)

It also characterised the very legitimate Muslims aspirations of removing western neo-colonial influence from Muslim lands and establishing the Caliphate as the goals of the 'terrorists',

"Although they act in the name of a religious cause, these terrorists have political goals. They want ultimately to establish a caliphate—a pan-Muslim super-state that unites all Muslims and all lands now or ever part of the Islamic world. This includes the Middle East and North Africa from the Red Sea to the Atlantic coast. It includes Andalusia in Spain, parts of the Balkans, Central and South Asia through to the Indonesian archipelago, and parts of the Philippines in South-East Asia.

They seek to drive the West's presence and influence from these lands. They oppose governments in Muslim countries—criticising them for being 'un-Islamic' and therefore illegitimate—and seek to replace them with ones that accord with their extremist views." (p. 9)

John Howard, then Prime Minister, said in July 2005, about the War on Terror,

"Those who see the resurgence of terrorism as simply the manifestation of the divide between the rich and the poor, the outcry of the distressed and the downtrodden, misunderstand the character of the challenge that our societies face. The terrorist challenge is based upon a perverted and totally invalid depiction of a great religion. We are fighting an ideology. We are not simply dealing with an outburst of legitimate anger against economic deprivation."¹⁴

In the same month he said in an interview on the 7.30 Report,

"...it is tremendously important in the long-term fight against terrorism that moderate Islamic governments and states like Afghanistan now ruled by Karzai are supported, because in the long run, the war against terror is much a struggle for control of the heart and minds of Islam as it is a struggle between the terrorists and the rest of the world."¹⁵

¹³ Australian Government, Terrorism White Paper 2004, *Transnational Terrorism: The Threat to Australia*, Department of Foreign Affairs, 15 Jul 2004: http://www.dfat.gov.au/publications/terrorism/transnational_terrorism.pdf

¹⁴ Associated Press. *Howard Defends War on Terror*, Taipei Times, 20 Jul 2005: <http://bit.ly/19iRQpA>

¹⁵ McKew, M. *Afghanistan Crucial to Terrorism Fight, Howard Says*, Australian Broadcasting Corporation, 13 Jul 2005: <http://www.abc.net.au/7.30/content/2005/s1413738.htm>

Alexander Downer, then Foreign Minister, in a Speech to the Centre for Muslim States and Societies at the University of Western Australia in November 2005, said,

“Let’s be crystal clear about what the terrorists are seeking. Let’s strip away the rhetoric and focus on the type of world they want to create. Their goal is to create a new extremist Caliphate in the Muslim world - a Taliban style theocracy. In South-East Asia they want to drive out western influence and establish a fundamentalist regime across Indonesia, Malaysia, Southern Thailand and Southern Philippines. The same for the Middle-East - a Caliphate stretching from the Caucuses to North Africa. They want to get rid of democracy in these countries and replace it with a puritanical regime that denies individual freedoms.”¹⁶

In an address to the National Press Club in April 2004, he said,

“It is crucial that we challenge the ideas by which terrorists seek to justify their actions. Otherwise we vacate the important intellectual battleground in the war against terrorism - allowing terrorists to exploit the politics of despair. In our engagement internationally with other governments, Australia makes clear our understanding that the campaign against terror must be fought on the battleground of ideas - side by side with efforts on law and order and security.”¹⁷

Current Prime Minister Tony Abbott, then Federal Health Minister, wrote in a December 2006 opinion piece,

“It’s now glaringly obvious that the war on terror will not be won by armies and security services, important though these are. The war on terror will only be won when people no longer feel that terror is justified. That’s why this debate about being Muslim and being Australian is part of Australia’s potential contribution to a safer world, along with our military forces in Iraq and Afghanistan.”¹⁸

Robert McClelland, then Attorney-General, said in 2011 in a ministerial statement on the 10th anniversary of the September 11 attacks,

“The Australian Government, like its counterparts in the United States and United Kingdom, understands that addressing the causes of radicalisation that lead to violent extremism is critical to tackling terrorism. Immediately after 9/11 there was much focus on international law enforcement, tough terrorism laws, and physical security measures, all of which have delivered results through the detection and deterrence of terrorist activity. What was less appreciated was that a strong counter-terrorism response needs broader strategies to lessen the appeal of extremist ideologies that fuel terrorism in the first place.”¹⁹

The approach of the Labor Government following Howard was the same in substance, as shown by its main policy documents on counter-terrorism and national security, examined herein under. However, its approach, from a form perspective, was to use less direct language that avoids linking Islam to terrorism and speaking explicitly of Muslims as the targets of counter-terrorism, even though they were its primary targets. This was formalised in 2008 with an explicit change in terrorism lexicon following similar changes in the US and UK²⁰. *A Lexicon on Terror*, a book compiled by the Victoria Police and the Australian Multicultural Foundation was issued in 2009 and endorsed by the Attorney-General at the time, Robert McClelland, who explained,

“Experience has shown that the language used to describe terrorism can be counter-productive. Certain words have the potential to glorify terrorism and terrorists, while others can cause anxiety among Australians and create divisions within and between communities.

¹⁶ Downer, A. *Interfaith Dialogue, the Australian Approach*, Speech to the Centre for Muslim States and Societies, UWA, 21 Nov 2005: http://www.foreignminister.gov.au/speeches/2005/051121_centre_for_muslim_states.html

¹⁷ Downer, A. *Australia and the Threat of Global Terrorism - A Test of Resolve*, Speech to the National Press Club, Canberra, 13 Apr 2004: http://www.foreignminister.gov.au/speeches/2004/040413_global_terrorism.html

¹⁸ Abbott, T. *Debate Needed on Islam’s Place*, *The Australian*, 14 Dec 2006: <http://bit.ly/19ATjWb>

¹⁹ McClelland, R. *Ministerial Statement - 10th anniversary of September 11 terrorist attacks*, House of Representatives, Parliament House, Canberra, 12 Sep 2011: <http://bit.ly/1bdfHIK>

²⁰ McClelland, R. *Speech To The Australian Strategic Policy Institute*, Canberra, 21 Jul 2009: <http://bit.ly/17kiu5e>

It is vital that the messages we send do not in any way glorify terrorism or suggest a war or clash between cultures or religions. Instead we need to adopt language that depicts acts of politically motivated violence as base criminal conduct of the most reprehensible kind.

I was very pleased to recently announce the commencement of a national project to examine the use of language in engaging with communities on national security issues, including violent extremism. Work on this project, the Lexicon of Terrorism, is being led by Victoria Police, in partnership with the Victorian Department of Premier and Cabinet, the Australian Multicultural Foundation, and my Department. This project will help Governments frame effective public information messages on national security issues by strengthening community harmony and disempowering potential violent extremists.”²¹

The new approach was to use language such as “violent extremism”, “extremist ideology” and “counter-terrorism” instead of “Islamist extremism” or “Islamic terrorism”. The phrase “war on terror” was also dropped because Muslims understood it (correctly) as a war on Islam.²²

This issue of language and trying to avoid certain perceptions amongst Muslims was noted explicitly in the report evaluating the counter-extremism programs of the *National Action Plan to Build on Social Cohesion, Harmony and Security* from 2005-2010.

“During stakeholder consultations held as part of the mid-term evaluation, some concerns were received about the NAP’s emphasis on Muslim communities and its perceived focus on counter-terrorism objectives.

“It is important to ensure that the public perceptions of such programs do not undermine the very purpose that they seek to achieve. Consideration could be given to whether the public documentation in relation to the programs that build resilience and address social exclusion need to be examined to assess whether there is a need to “soften” the language to minimise the perception of specifically being targeted within Australia’s Muslim communities.

“The majority of community and government stakeholders were uneasy about the NAP’s public focus on Muslim Australians and believe it unfairly stigmatises all Muslims as terrorists. This has led to scepticism among some community members about the true motives behind the NAP, creating a barrier to the participation of some who may otherwise have become involved with NAP-related projects and events.”²³

Australian foreign policy towards the Muslim world has been in line with the above articulations and in step with that of the US and UK. It is important to note that the foreign policy and domestic policy go hand-in-hand as part of overall counter-terrorism policy.

In the foreword of the 2006 Government counter-terrorism policy document, then Prime Minister John Howard said,

“Effective domestic action is essential in fighting terrorism, but terrorism knows no boundaries and no single country or government can combat the threat by acting alone. Australia’s counter-terrorism strategy is therefore based on the close alignment of our domestic and international policies. Australia is pursuing a targeted bilateral, regional and global approach to enhance our national security.”²⁴

Key amongst the concerns highlighted by the National Security Strategy²⁵, issued by the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet in January 2013, is the threat from terrorism and violent extremism (labelled as a “key national security risk”). Countering it is a pillar of Australia’s national security. In terms of foreign

²¹ Peatling, S. *War On Terrorism is Over ... In Lexicon*, The Sydney Morning Herald, 7 Jul 2007: <http://bit.ly/GHjSCx>

²² Zwartz, B. *Do Not Confuse Islam With Terrorism, Says Book*, The Age, 20 Jul 2009: <http://bit.ly/1bdfHk>

²³ Australian Government, Department of Immigration and Citizenship, *National Action Plan to Build on Social Cohesion, Harmony and Security - Final Evaluation Report (September 2005 to June 2010)*, 2010, p. 4,6, 20: <http://bit.ly/1c8ZaG6>

²⁴ Australian Government, *Protecting Australia against Terrorism 2006*, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, 2006, p. i: <http://bit.ly/17gTFRS>

²⁵ Australian Government. *Strong And Secure: A Strategy for Australia’s National Security*, Dept. of Prime Minister & Cabinet, 23 Jan 2013: <http://bit.ly/Uj5XWI>

policy, this is achieved through a number of means, including:

“Deploying our army, navy and air force personnel in 14 Operations across the globe, contributing to stability in our neighbourhood, combating terrorism and upholding a rules-based global order;” and “Maintaining a strong Australia–United States Alliance and a growing network of strategic relationships with neighbours and regional partners.” (p. 17)

Such measures indicate that Australian foreign policy involves, amongst other measures, deployment of Australian armed forces in various regions to combat what is deemed ‘terrorism’. This has been the Australian Government’s approach since the inception of the War on Terror. The Howard government pledged Australian troops to war efforts in both Afghanistan and Iraq, citing global terrorism concerns as justification. This stance was maintained by successive governments, Labor and Coalition alike, and remains the stance till present.

In early 2013, the Department of Defence released the *Defence White Paper 2013*²⁶. This white paper provides, in some detail, the Australian Government’s “complex strategic judgements about risks and opportunities in the international strategic environment.” It assesses the global strategic outlook and provides the Government’s “strategic policy approach” to key international issues. Amongst these issues are foreign policy concerns about extremism and terrorism, about which the paper notes,

“...our longstanding presence [in Afghanistan] has served our interest in a secure and stable Afghanistan that does not host international terrorism able to reach into our own region.” (p. 16)

“Terrorist networks maintain the intent to attack Western interests, but are increasingly decentralised, with sympathisers, including those located in Western homelands, more often seeking to attack without Al Qaeda’s direct involvement or explicit guidance.” (p. 18)

The 2010 Counter-Terrorism White Paper²⁷, issued by the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet in February 2010, also links Australia’s domestic counter-terrorism efforts to her involvement abroad:

“The policy outlined in this White Paper delivers an effective and balanced approach that further strengthens our domestic counter-terrorism efforts and makes a strong contribution to international counter-terrorism efforts.” (p. i)

“An effective counter-terrorism strategy requires a combination of appropriate security and law enforcement responses, and broader strategies to enhance social cohesion and resilience, and lessen the appeal of the extremist ideologies that fuel terrorism. Since 2001, significant resources have been committed to identifying, arresting and prosecuting those planning to commit a terrorist attack. We also have robust measures for responding to, and recovering from, a terrorist incident.

In addition to intelligence and law enforcement approaches to counter-terrorism, other instruments of government, as well as communities, can contribute to addressing the broader long-term causes of terrorism and violent extremism, and the conditions in which they thrive. The states and territories are ideally placed to work with the community to identify, implement and manage local solutions to local problems and to develop local level resilience. Many policing programs at the state and territory level are aimed at building social cohesion.” (p. 65)

Highlighting this link between foreign policy and domestic policy on counter-terrorism is imperative. Some people tend to sever the two, holding the view that whilst the foreign policy is oppressive and exploitative the domestic policy is justified. In reality, the two go hand-in-hand, forming part of what was intended as a coherent whole. They are part of the same holistic approach and have the same overall objectives.

In the rest of this report we focus on the domestic component of the Australian Government’s counter-terrorism policies.

²⁶ Australian Government. *Defence White Paper 2013*, Department of Defence, 3 May 2013: <http://bit.ly/13QKmrw>

²⁷ Australian Government, *Counter-Terrorism White Paper: Securing Australia – Protecting our Community*, Department of the Prime Minister and cabinet, 23 Feb 2010: <http://bit.ly/GMkreB>



CHAPTER 3

AUSTRALIA'S LOCAL CAMPAIGN AGAINST ISLAM AND MUSLIMS

As part of its war on terror, the Australian Government targeted the Muslim community in Australia in various ways. The narrative was that terrorism is primarily a result of radical interpretations of Islam which carry appeal amongst some Muslims and hence need to be combated. This is done through various 'soft' and 'hard' measures, including:

- the introduction of draconian anti-terror legislation
- spying and surveillance of Muslims and community mosques and centres
- demonising Islamic ideals, beliefs and practices deemed 'extreme'
- re-defining the meaning of citizenship and impressing 'Australian values' unto Muslims
- holding the Muslim community responsible for extremism and terrorism
- using Muslims to implement the Government's policies through funding
- promoting 'moderate Islam' as an antidote to 'radical Islam'
- dividing the Muslim community into moderates and radicals
- creating a compliant and moderate Muslim leadership
- targeting Imams and youth in particular
- using fronts such as social initiatives and interfaith dialogue

It is important to note that all these various 'soft' and 'hard' measures form part of the the same overall policy, as noted, amongst others, by Bill Paterson, Australian Ambassador for Counter-Terrorism, in March 2012.

"Terrorism is in the end a potent form of criminality, where intelligence, specialist military support, law enforcement, border security, the application of due legal process, counter-radicalisation, social and community integration, socio-economic development, education and the rehabilitation of convicted terrorists all form part of a coherent policy response."²⁸

In implementing such policies, the Australian Government was largely following the counter-terrorism models of other leading western nations, the UK in particular.

²⁸ Patterson, B. *Transnational Terrorism ten years on: dealing with a mutating threat*, AVSEC Canberra March 2012, p. 12: <http://bit.ly/18B8Epu>



SECTION I

**AUSTRALIA FOLLOWS
LEADING NATIONS**

Strategies employed upon the Muslim community by Australian governments, federal and state, are born out of a global context and in line with very much a global strategy adopted by western governments. Overwhelmingly, the policies enacted by current and previous Australian governments have been modelled on and trace their origins to like-minded nations, predominantly the United Kingdom and the United States.

What follows are statements from policymakers and government sources highlighting a common approach and close co-operation between leading western nations in developing and implementing counter-terrorism policy and in dealing with the Muslim Community.

“I found the governments in the United States relied heavily on the wisdom and the insights of a lot of those scholars of all religious backgrounds who have benefited from understanding one another. And that meant within the US, they are making more balanced decisions and helping the integration of Muslim members of their community in an effective way.” - Andrew Robb, Education Minister, explaining at the launch of the National Centre for Excellence in Islamic Studies (NCEIS) in October 2007 how the centre was modelled on the Centre for Muslim-Christian Understanding at Georgetown University in Washington.²⁹

“I believe this [community engagement] is an area of national security where we can do better. We need to develop a much more sophisticated approach. I was recently in the UK and was very impressed by the innovative work they’re doing in this area. They’ve developed sophisticated programs to help Muslim communities resist violent extremism and to prevent the radicalisation of vulnerable individuals. Their approach is built on partnerships between a range of government agencies, police, local government and Muslim communities. This nexus of organisations, all of which are pulling in the same direction, is something Australia is yet to properly consider. That’s why I’ve tasked my Department to work with other relevant agencies to develop strategies to empower communities to counter extremism.” – Robert McClelland, Attorney-General, July 2008.³⁰

“But there are other steps we need to take to prevent home-grown extremism. We must also understand the different stages of radicalisation and the activities likely to be associated with each of these. In addition, we should look at initiatives being tried in other countries, adapting those, when relevant, to the Australian situation. I travelled to the United Kingdom earlier this year. They are tackling this issue by building partnerships between government agencies, police and Islamic communities. I’ve tasked my Department to work with other relevant agencies, as well as the states and territories, to develop strategies for helping Australian communities to counter extremism, taking note of the UK example.” - Robert McClelland, Attorney-General, September 2008, Security in Government Conference.³¹

“The Australian Government is continuing to learn from international best practice in counter-radicalisation by engaging with international experts and other governments through international forums. The information contributes to Australia’s countering violent extremism program.” - Resilient Communities website.³²

“In developing this [counter violent-extremism] strategy, we have looked at similar programs overseas and also programs undertaken by the States and Territories here in Australia.” – Robert McClelland, Attorney-General at ANU National Security College, July 2010.³³

“The Australian Government, like our allies in the United States and the United Kingdom, recognise that addressing the causes of radicalisation leading to violent extremism must be a priority.” – Robert McClelland, Attorney-General, June 2011.³⁴

The importance placed on international cooperation is indicated by the fact that a new position of

²⁹ Australian Associated Press, *Islamic Studies ‘Will Counter Ignorance’*, The Sydney Morning Herald, 23 Oct 2007: <http://bit.ly/19iU5sQ>

³⁰ McClelland, R. *Safeguarding Australia 2008*, Canberra, 23 Jul 2008: <http://bit.ly/16SoGkJ>

³¹ McClelland, R. *Security in Government Conference 2008*, Canberra, 16 Sep 2008: <http://bit.ly/19AXqHK>

³² Australian Government, Attorney-General’s Dept., *International Experts Share Their Knowledge*, Resilient Communities, 25 Feb 2013: <http://bit.ly/GPrCCO>

³³ McClelland, R. *Community Resilience and National Security: An Agenda for the Future*, Australian National University National Security College Canberra, 13 Jul 2010: <http://bit.ly/1cxuLVO>

³⁴ McClelland, R. *Address to the United States Studies Centre, ‘The 9/11 decade’*, USYD, 07 Jun 2011: <http://bit.ly/1c2hGRO>

Ambassador of Counter-Terrorism was established in March 2003 by the Howard Government.³⁵ Bill Fischer is the current Ambassador, appointed by Bob Carr, then Foreign Minister, in March 2013. The role of this position is “to assist in coordinating and promoting Australia’s international counter-terrorism efforts.”³⁶

In May 2012, Nicola Roxon as Australian Attorney-General signed the *U.S.-Australia Joint Statement on Countering Transnational Crime, Terrorism and Violent Extremism* with the Department of Homeland Security in the US.³⁷ The introduction of the statement noted,

“Recognizing our shared interests in countering threats to the international system, the United States of America and Australia hereby affirm our intention to continue and enhance our close collaboration to share information to combat transnational crime and terrorism, and expand our cooperation on countering violent extremism.”³⁸

We also note explicit mention of using the UK approach as a model in the statements by Robert McClelland above particularly with respect to Muslim community ‘engagement’. This is precisely what occurred and this can be seen when the policies of the UK and Australia are examined.

Contest, and its later update Contest Two, is Britain’s counter-terrorism strategy, the community engagement component of which is known as Prevent. As the name suggests, Prevent is about preventing terrorism and what is perceived as the precursors to the violent act. In November 2010, the Home Secretary of Britain announced a review of Prevent, and in June 2011 the revision was released in a report that detailed the new Prevent strategy.³⁹ The following are some excerpts from this report:

“Within this overall framework the new Prevent strategy will specifically:

- respond to the **ideological challenge** of terrorism and the threat we face from those who promote it;
- **prevent people from being drawn into terrorism** and ensure that they are given appropriate advice and support; and
- work with **sectors and institutions** where there are risks of radicalisation which we need to address.”
(p. 7)

“Challenging ideology and disrupting the ability of terrorists to promote it is a fundamental part of Prevent.”
(p. 8)

“Radicalisation is usually a process not an event. During that process it is possible to intervene to prevent vulnerable people being drawn into terrorist-related activity.” (p. 8)

“Some sectors (like faith) have been at the forefront of work to tackle radicalisation in this country. But more can and must be done” (p.8)

“In assessing drivers of and pathways to radicalisation, the line between extremism and terrorism is often blurred. Terrorist groups of all kinds very often draw upon ideologies which have been developed, disseminated and popularised by extremist organisations that appear to be non-violent (such as groups which neither use violence nor specifically and openly endorse its use by others).” (p. 19)

“A stronger sense of ‘belonging’ and citizenship makes communities more **resilient** to terrorist ideology

³⁵ Forbes, M. *New Ambassador to take on terror*, The Age, 08 Mar 2003: <http://www.theage.com.au/articles/2003/03/07/1046826530752.html>

³⁶ Australian Minister for Foreign Affairs, *Ambassador for Counter-Terrorism*, Media release, 14 March 2013: http://www.foreignminister.gov.au/releases/2013/bc_mr_130314a.html

³⁷ Australian Attorney-General, *Australia and United States working together on homeland security*, Media release, 04 May 2012: <http://bit.ly/Ha2TcS>

³⁸ US Embassy, Canberra, *U.S.-Aust. Joint Statement on Countering Transnational Crime, Terrorism and Violent Extremism*, May 2012: <http://1.usa.gov/PG4VBW>

³⁹ HM Government. *Prevent Strategy*, Home Office, Jun 2011: <http://bit.ly/10imD4f>

and propagandists. We believe that Prevent depends on integration, democratic participation and a strong interfaith dialogue.” (p. 27))

“The relationship between Prevent and cohesion and integration needs to be very carefully managed. Prevent depends on a successful cohesion and integration strategy.” (p. 30)

“Prevent police funding has also been spent on initiatives primarily intended to build resilience and promote cohesion.” (p. 29)

“Active citizenship training for local Muslim women’s forum. Training of Imams in English language.” (p. 28)

“We will also encourage and seek to work with the many mosques in the UK who have already taken a leading role in challenging terrorism. We recognise and want to support the key role of Imams in reaching young Muslims and being able to engage with them on these issues.” (p. 52)

“In 2007, DCLG facilitated the creation of a Mosques and Imams National Advisory Board (MINAB), founded by four national Muslim organisations who continue to hold vice-chair positions on an executive board of over fifty people from a wide range of backgrounds. MINAB now has over 600 mosques as members. Its purpose is to improve mosque governance and management and to enable Imams to work in this country and with young people in particular. This work was funded by Prevent on the basis that better-governed mosques and more capable Imams would increase what was then described as ‘community resilience’ to terrorism.” (p. 81)

“We believe that it will also be vital that given the threats and risks we face, faith leaders (Imams in particular, but also other role models) are able to engage with young people and talk to them about the issues they face and concerns they have...We also recognise the important part that management committees play in mosques, especially in advising the imam on his priorities and his role.” (p. 82)

“We judge that significant progress has been made by communities to equip faith leaders with the skills and the qualifications to reach out to young people vulnerable to radicalisation and recruitment. We support that process and want to continue to assist with it where it is appropriate for Government to do so. We believe that MINAB can play a role here alongside many other groups and look to its participating groups to clearly support Prevent.” (p. 82)

As we outline the ‘community engagement’ strategies of the Australian Government in the rest of this report (chapter three) it will become apparent that these are essentially the same as those implemented in the UK.



SECTION II

ABSOLVING FOREIGN POLICY & HOLDING MUSLIMS RESPONSIBLE FOR TERRORISM

A key part of the Australian Government's counter-terrorism policy is to shift the blame for terrorism onto Muslims and absolve themselves from it. This is based on the flawed narrative in which the primary cause of terrorism is 'radical' Islamic ideology, and in which western foreign policy is either entirely ignored as a cause or underplayed. This is in spite of the undisputable reality that sustained oppression of people will lead to reactions, and that sustained violent oppression of people will, naturally, lead to violent reactions.

Foreign policy

Western foreign policy with respect to the Muslim world has, of course, being extremely oppressive and violent for decades.

It has featured one nation-destroying war that results in the deaths of tens of thousands of people after another; support for dictators (Mubarak, Abdullah, Musharraf *et al*) who make life hell for millions of people as rulers ruling by the iron fist; military bases littered all over the Muslim world; bloody coups and counter-coups as means of intervention by western powers seeking to secure their interests in different nations; the use of mercenaries, like Blackwater, to instigate sectarian and civil discord in places like Iraq and Pakistan; support for the unjust imprisonment for years on end of Islamic political activists; economic exploitation that keeps millions in poverty and destitution; extrajudicial killing, imprisonment and torture; and drone attacks which kill hundreds of innocent people. Ruthless oppression that affects mothers, fathers, sons and daughters, young and old, on a daily basis and has done so, not for a month or two or even a year or two, but for decades.

Had this been the reality of Australia or Western Europe, we would naturally expect a reaction against the oppressor. This goes to the core of human responses to the survival instinct, a matter beyond distinctions of race, religion or ideology. Yet, somehow all of this is not relevant when understanding terrorism according to western policymakers whose counter-terrorism narrative has gone from denying that foreign policy is a cause at all to belated recognition that it plays a role- but only because it is exploited by extremists not because it represents oppression and provocation- and whose counter-terrorism policy ignores it entirely, even though it's role has been established by research,⁴⁰ time⁴¹ and again⁴², shown by survey data⁴³, and is the dictate of plain old common sense.

This has been the approach across the board in the West.

Denying the role of foreign policy

Originally blunt and arrogant, foreign policy having any role was flatly denied.

Charles Clarke, then UK Home Secretary, said in October 2005,

"It is equally wrong to claim, as some do, that the motivation of al-Qaeda and their allies is driven by some desire to seek justice in the Middle East--the part of the world where progress has been most difficult to achieve in the past 30 years. I do not accept that in any respect. Al-Qaeda and its allies have no clear demands for the Middle East. In fact, the only common thread in their approach is a violent and destructive

⁴⁰ Pape, A. *It's the Occupation, Stupid*, Foreign Policy, 18 Oct 2010: <http://atfp.co/cRjD2u>

⁴¹ Savun, B. & Phillips, B. *Democracy, Foreign Policy, and Terrorism*, Journal of Conflict Resolution, Dec 2009: <http://jcr.sagepub.com/content/53/6/878.abstract>

⁴² Eland, I. *Excessive U.S. Military Action Overseas Breeds Anti-U.S. Terrorism*, Cato Institute, 21 Nov 2002: http://files.wcfia.harvard.edu/615__Eland.pdf

⁴³ Pew Research Center. *How the United States is Perceived in the Arab and Muslim Worlds*, Pew Global Attitudes Project, 10 Nov 2005: <http://bit.ly/VrMMu9>

opposition to democracy in any form.”⁴⁴

Tony Blair, in his final address as Prime Minister to the Labour Party Conference in September 2006, said quite explicitly,

“And of course, the new anxiety is the global struggle against terrorism without mercy or limit. This is a struggle that will last a generation and more. But this I believe passionately: we will not win until we shake ourselves free of the wretched capitulation to the propaganda of the enemy, that somehow we are the ones responsible. This terrorism isn’t our fault. We didn’t cause it. It’s not the consequence of foreign policy. It’s an attack on our way of life. It’s global. It has an ideology.”⁴⁵

In Australia, the case has been the same. The Terrorism White Paper of 2004 not only denied the role of foreign policy, it painted Australia foreign policy in a positive light and claimed that Australia is a target not because of what it does to people abroad but because of who it is and what it stands for.

“These terrorists feel threatened by us, and by our example as a conspicuously successful modern society... The core values we hold and which are intrinsic to our success as a liberal democratic culture are anathema to these extremists. For them, our beliefs in democratic process, racial and gender equality, religious tolerance and equality of opportunity are mere human inventions at odds with God’s law.

And we advance our values through an active foreign policy. We energetically support democracy, human rights and religious freedoms in our international contribution and through our participation in international forums like the United Nations. Our close alliance with the United States, our role in East Timor, our early and active engagement in the war in Afghanistan, and our involvement in the Coalition in Iraq are often cited by transnational terrorists as reasons for targeting us.

Our actions are cited as evidence of the imagined conspiracy against Muslims as the terrorists attempt to draw support for their extremist views. They do this cleverly, invoking causes which resonate strongly and authentically in the broader Muslim community. But the essence of their objections is not our actions. Rather, it is our example as a people and as a society, and the values we stand for.”⁴⁶

Imposing the responsibility of terrorism on Muslims

By placing the responsibility of terrorism on the shoulders of the Muslim community, the Government absolves its foreign policy of being held responsible for terrorism and the community is ‘softly’ coerced into directly participating and at times leading programs designed to realise the Government’s agenda.

Under the 2005-2010 National Action Plan, offering assistance to community leaders in order to respond to potential threats was identified as a desired outcome resulting from government-community consultations,

“...assisting leaders of communities whose members may be at risk of becoming extremists to convey to the wider community that they will actively respond to issues within their community that potentially threaten Australia’s social cohesion and national security”⁴⁷

Andrew Robb, Parliamentary Secretary for Immigration and Multicultural Affairs at the time, was clear about who the Government thought should assume the responsibility of terrorism. In a speech entitled, ‘Australian Migrant Integration — Past Successes, Future Challenges,’ on 27 April 2006, he stated,

“...much can be gained by seeking to put ourselves in one another’s shoes.

⁴⁴ Clarke, C. *Contesting the Threat of Terrorism*, The Heritage Foundation, 21 Oct 2005: <http://herit.ag/nBTOzo>

⁴⁵ Blair, T. In full: *Tony Blair’s speech*, BBC News, 26 Sep 2006: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/politics/5382590.stm

⁴⁶ Australian Government, *Terrorism White Paper 2004, Transnational Terrorism: The Threat to Australia*, Department of Foreign Affairs, 15 Jul 2004, p. 68-69: http://www.dfat.gov.au/publications/terrorism/transnational_terrorism.pdf

⁴⁷ Australian Government. *A National Action Plan to Build on Social Cohesion, Harmony and Security*, Department of Immigration and Border Protection, 2006: <http://bit.ly/1awVPRQ>

This means, for Australian Muslims, putting themselves in the shoes of the rest of the Australian community, most of whom are filled with anxiety and uncertainty about how to deal with the reality of random terrorist acts, ostensibly in the name of Islam.

And for the rest of the Australian community, this means putting themselves in the shoes of the 300,000 Australian Muslims, 120,000 of whom were born in Australia, most of whom are filled with a sense of alienation and helplessness about how to deal with the reality of random terrorist acts, by people purporting to be acting in the name of Islam.

To that end, one of the most important factors is Muslims taking the lead, Muslims assuming primary responsibility.”⁴⁸

The Australian Government met with representatives of the Muslim community over months at the time in order to get the community to accept responsibility and hence to act upon the National Action Plan. A reoccurring theme in these discussions was the threat that the unfair stigmatisation of the community would continue if the Muslims were not to take up this responsibility.

“After months of discussions with Muslim communities, I believe that the unfair stigmatisation will not change materially until all Australian Muslims take responsibility for addressing the situation they find themselves in. As part of this, I urge you to take ownership of the initiatives in the National Action Plan and make sure they work on the ground in your communities.” – Andrew Robb, August 2006⁴⁹

In his address to imams in 2006 at the *Conference of Australian Imams*, he put responsibility for terrorism on Muslims quite directly,

“These are challenging times for Muslims.

“As the spiritual leaders of Australian Muslims you carry major responsibilities.

“In some ways those responsibilities are daunting, but they are also rich with opportunity,

“In this situation, Muslims themselves have the responsibility, even the obligation, to...bring the focus again on the overwhelming majority of Muslims who, in living up to the teachings of their religion, stand for mutual respect and understanding and reject terrorism...

“This theme of responsibility, leadership and opportunity is at the heart of my comments this morning.

“And, because it is your faith that is being invoked as justification for these evil acts, it is your problem.

“You can’t wish it away, or ignore it just because it has been caused by others. It is very much part of the world-wide struggle going on for the soul of Islam, a struggle that will be won or lost by Muslims, not non-Muslims.” - Andrew Robb, September 2006.

It came as no surprise, then, that the hand-picked Muslim Community Reference Group acknowledged responsibility in its ‘Action Plan’ report issued in September 2006,

“The MCRG recognises that terrorism presents huge challenges to all communities and it is important that the government takes steps to address it. In addition, Muslims themselves, along with everyone else in the community, have a responsibility to take measures to deal constructively with the issue, while, at the same time, it is important to recognise that most Muslims are not terrorists.”⁵⁰

Current Prime Minister Tony Abbott, then Federal Minister for Health, also weighed in to the same effect in October 2006,

⁴⁸ Robb, A. *Australian Migrant Integration - Past Successes, Future Challenges*, Sydney Institute, 27 Apr 2006: <http://bit.ly/GKI0nQ>

⁴⁹ Robb, A. *Address to the Muslim Community Reference Group*, Rydges Capital Hill Canberra, 2 Aug 2006: <http://bit.ly/1gy9E5I>

⁵⁰ Muslim Community Reference Group. *Building on social cohesion, harmony and security: An action plan by the MCRG*, Sep 2006: <http://bit.ly/17IB5hp>

“It would be easier for Australians to appreciate Islam if more Islamic leaders seemed readier to condemn terrorism rather than explain how the West might in some way have contributed to that.”⁵¹

The Labour Government took the same approach.⁵²

“Perceived grievances”

More recently, both in the UK and Australia, the recognition that foreign policy plays a role is made. However, it is falsely characterised as “perceived grievances” which extremists exploit or “reactions to overseas events” and is asserted as a minor cause at best.

In the UK, the original stance under Tony Blair was to deny that foreign policy was a cause at all, as noted in the reference to his final address to the Labour Party Conference. The first update of the UK Government’s counter-terrorism policy (Contest) in March 2009, however, acknowledged a nominal role for foreign policy, as does the second update and most recent (third) version of Contest (July 2011). It states,

“The grievances upon which propagandists can draw may be real or perceived, although clearly none of them justify terrorism. They include a perception of foreign policy, in particular towards the Muslim majority world; a sense and experience of Islamophobia; and counterterrorism powers, which have sometimes been regarded as discriminatory or disproportionate.” (p.36)

Nevertheless, it maintains that this makes little difference,

“With some exceptions we continue to believe that the analysis made in 2007 of the causes of radicalisation in this country was broadly correct – radicalisation is being driven by ideology, by a number of people who set out to disseminate these ideologies and by vulnerabilities in people which make them susceptible to a message of violence. Radicalisers exploit grievances; which (where Al Qa’ida inspired terrorism is concerned) include a perception of our foreign policy, the experience of Islamophobia and a broader view that the west is at war with Islam itself. These grievances may be real or perceived although none of them should provide justification for the use of terrorism.” (p.60)⁵³

Prime Minister David Cameron, in the build up to the launch of the Prevent review in 2011, spoke of the need for a more assertive, ‘muscular liberalism’ across Europe. The review itself placed blame once again firmly onto the Muslim community and its values. The problem, the government surmised was not that violence begets violence, but rather “that support for terrorism is associated with rejection of a cohesive, integrated, multi-faith society and of parliamentary democracy.”⁵⁴

It was not that the West had tried to shove its values down the throats of Muslims and others at the barrel of a gun, thereby fuelling retaliatory action, but that Muslims at home were not sufficiently ‘British’.

In Australia too, more recent policy, relative to that of 2005-6 noted above, whilst continuing to hold the Muslim community responsible for terrorism, nominally finds a role for foreign policy.

Robert McClelland, then Attorney-General, said in September 2011,

⁵¹ Zinn, C. *Young Muslims Speak out to Counter Misconceptions*, ABC, 3 Oct 2006: <http://www.abc.net.au/7.30/content/2006/s1754890.htm>

⁵² See section VII of chapter three.

⁵³ Secretary of State for the Home Department. *Contest: The United Kingdom’s Strategy for Countering Terrorism*, Secretary of State for the Home Department, Jul 2011: <http://bit.ly/17RxsKv>

⁵⁴ Secretary of State for the Home Department. *Prevent Strategy*, Secretary of State for the Home Department, Jun 2011: <http://bit.ly/10imD4f>

“All community leaders have a responsibility to assist in building our tolerant and inclusive society that is itself a powerful tool against the emergence of extremism.

“Communities have many roles to play, including identifying and supporting vulnerable individuals to choose a path away from violence, and developing localised solutions to address vulnerabilities and grievances.”⁵⁵

The Rudd Labour Government’s 2010 Counter-Terrorism White Paper also ran with the narrative that terrorism is a result of radical ideology,

“The main source of international terrorism and the primary terrorist threat to Australia and Australian interests is from a global violent jihadist movement – extremists who follow a distorted and militant interpretation of Islam that espouses violence as the answer to perceived grievances.”⁵⁶

Robert McClelland said in February 2010, in response to questions without notice on the white paper,

“Research shows that there is no single pathway to violent extremism. The factors seem to indicate a reaction to overseas events, grievances with local and national issues and even individual circumstances such as poor education and socioeconomic factors.”⁵⁷

Notwithstanding this recognition the role of foreign policy as a cause of terrorism still plays no role whatsoever in counter-terrorism policy, apart from the assertion that the ‘perception’ of grievance needs to be challenged. This is in spite of admissions by even some policymakers that foreign policy causes radicalisation. Laurie Ferguson, then Parliamentary Secretary for Multicultural Affairs, said in March 2008 in response to a question about what he saw the factors contributing to radicalisation as being,

“I really think that on the one hand there’s foreign policy issues, and I’m not saying that Australia follows a foreign policy position just to placate the Islamic community, or that we should have as our No.1 aim to make sure they’re not against us. But realistically, the question of Palestine, the intervention in Iraq, they are issues that force radicalisation.”⁵⁸

Worse still is the fact that the foreign policy of the Australian Government falls under its own definitions of terrorism and violent extremism.

Foreign policy is terrorism

The Australian Government’s working definition of ‘terrorism’, as mentioned in the current Counter-Terrorism White Paper is, “use of violence by groups or individuals pursuing political objectives”⁵⁹. In the previous Terrorism White Paper the more formal definition from the Criminal Code Act was used, namely, “an action or threat of action where the action causes certain defined forms of harm or interference and the action is done or the threat is made with the intention of advancing a political, religious or ideological cause.”⁶⁰ As for ‘violent extremism’ it is defined as, “the use or support of violence to achieve ideological, religious or political goals”.⁶¹

⁵⁵ McClelland, R. *Ministerial Statement - 10th anniversary of September 11 terrorist attacks*, House of Representatives, Parliament House, Canberra, 12 Sep 2011: <http://bit.ly/1bdfHik>.

⁵⁶ Australian Government. *Counter-Terrorism White Paper: Securing Australia – Protecting our Community*, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, 23 Feb 2010, p. 8: <http://bit.ly/GMkreB>

⁵⁷ Attorney-General. *Questions Without Notice - Counter Terrorism White Paper*, Attorney-General for Australia, 24 Feb 2010: <http://bit.ly/16DWb4z>

⁵⁸ Crittenden, S. *A new Muslim Community Reference Group?*, ABC’s The Religion Report, 26 Mar 2008: <http://ab.co/1aMLWMA>

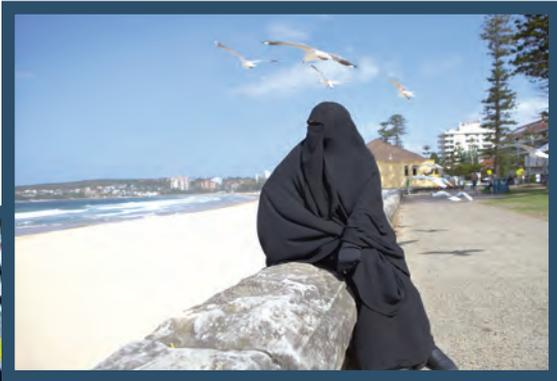
⁵⁹ Australian Government, *Counter-Terrorism White Paper: Securing Australia – Protecting our Community*, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, 23 Feb 2010, p. 3: <http://bit.ly/GMkreB>

⁶⁰ Australian Government, *Terrorism White Paper 2004 - Transnational Terrorism: The Threat to Australia*, Department of Foreign Affairs, 15 Jul 2004, p. 3: http://www.dfat.gov.au/publications/terrorism/transnational_terrorism.pdf

⁶¹ Australian Government. *Countering Violent Extremism*, Attorney-General’s Department: <http://bit.ly/19aOXHL>

Evidently, both these terms, by these very definitions, apply to the actions of the Australian Government abroad, such as in participation in the invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan which clearly entailed the infliction of harm through violence done to advance political and ideological causes such as toppling regimes and spreading democracy.

This – the ignoring of foreign policy as terrorism itself and as a cause of terrorism – is one of the clearest indications that the West’s fight against terrorism in general and that of the Australian Government in particular is not genuine; it is, in fact, a cover for the pursuance of economic and political interests.



SECTION III

DEMONISING ISLAM AND MUSLIMS

Demonisation serves a strategic objective, namely, to create the environment of concern and fear among society towards a particular community in order to then justify extraordinary policies introduced for it. In the present case, politicians create fear and concern about Muslims in order to justify their foreign policies in the Muslim world and extraordinary domestic policies that target Muslims living in Australia.

This is achieved through sensational and fear-mongering commentary on various aspects of Islamic belief, practice and attire, by politicians and mainstream media, the latter here acting as a reflector of state policy rather than a check on it.

In this respect, in the last decade or so we have seen:

- excessive and exaggerated coverage of conflicts involving Muslims locally and abroad;
- sensational coverage of incidents involving Muslims through out-of-context sound bites;
- twisting comments from sermons delivered by community leaders and Imams;
- using labels of ‘extremists’, ‘radicals’, ‘fundamentalists’ which carry strong negative connotations;
- generally portraying aspects of Islam deemed problematic as backward, irrational, and threatening;
- provoking angry responses by insulting what Muslims hold sacred in the name of freedom of expression and facilitating such provocation;
- portraying Muslim immigrants as a menace to society;
- suggesting that Shariah is creeping into society and that Muslims seek to take over;
- portraying Muslims as a fifth column;

The following are but some example of news headlines which demonstrate the above:

- “Thief asked sheikh if he should give to charity”, Sydney Morning Herald, 1 June 2013.
- “Are young Australian Muslims being radicalised on home soil?” ABC’s 7:30 Report, 30 May 2013.
- “Halal food dishing out radical change to society”, The Daily Telegraph, 22 May 2013.
- “Sharia widespread in local community”, The Australian, 20 March 2012
- “Sharia unwelcome”, The Australian, 9 March 2012
- “Sharia law at work in Australia”, The Australian- 20 July 2011
- “Imams call for sharia law in Australia”, The West Australian, 11 July 2011
- “Repressing women is sharia’s raison d’etre”, The Sydney Morning Herald, 5 May 2011
- “The extremes of moderate Islam”, The Australian, 20 October 2010
- “Veil of Suspicion”, 60 Minutes, 21 May 2010
- “Australian former PM warns against sharia law,” ABC Online , 6 Mar 2008
- “Islam and terrorism,” The Religion Report, ABC Online, 18 July 2007
- “Muslim extremists recruiting Australian Somalis,” The Sydney Morning Herald, 13 April 2007
- “How we can all work with Muslims,” News.com.au, 11 Mar 2007
- “Muslims fear extremists will seize control,” The Australian, 1 November 2006
- “Muslim leader blames women for sex attacks,” The Australian, 26 October 2006
- “Acceptance of their intolerance- it’s all part of radical Islam’s plan,” The Sydney Morning Herald, 9 February 2006

There is also no shortage of intentional and irresponsible commentary in this regard by policymakers, of which Muslims are all too familiar. The following small sample thus suffices here.

Public schools where there is a uniform, the uniform is a great leveller, it is a great sign of a society that is working with different cultures. But it is being used by the sort of people who want to overturn our values as an iconic emblem of defiance and a point of difference...It's not about headscarves per se, it's about a clash of cultures where there are extremist Muslim leaders who are calling for the overthrow of the laws that indeed give me my freedom and my equality as defined by the society in which I live. Now, this morning on a debate with a Muslim lady, she said she felt free being a Muslim, and I would simply say that in Nazi Germany, Nazis felt free and comfortable. That is not the sort of definition of freedom that I want for my country." - Bronwyn Bishop, then NSW MP, now Speaker of the Federal House of Representatives, 29 August 2005.⁶²

"The burqa is no longer simply the symbol of female repression and Islamic culture, it is now emerging as a disguise of bandits and n'er do wells...the burqa has no place in Australian society. I would go as far as to say it is un-Australian. To me, the burqa represents the repressive domination of men over women, which has no place in our society and compromises some of the most important aspects of human communication." – Cory Bernardi, May 2010.⁶³

"I find the burka a particularly confronting form of attire. And I would very much wish that fewer Australians would choose it." - Tony Abbott, August 2010.⁶⁴

"There is no place for sharia law in Australian society and the government strongly rejects any proposal for its introduction, including in relation to wills and succession. The Australian government is committed to protecting the right of all people to practise their religion without intimidation or harassment, but always within the framework of Australian law." – Nicola Roxon, Attorney-General, March 2012.⁶⁵

"...it is absolutely extraordinary that a great liberal institution would take a huge leap back into the dark ages...I just think it's un-Australian what's happened here and I can't understand for a second why Melbourne University would tolerate it." Tony Abbott on gender segregation at an Islamic event, April 2013.⁶⁶

In fact, Islam and Muslims have become a target of the state and its media machine to such an extent that they only 'positive' portrayals of Muslims are when they aspire towards the socially-approved secular normal 'normal'. Stories of Muslim playing sport or engaging in art or the like, which basically seek to show that Muslims, too, are 'normal' human beings 'just like us' the secular liberal white point of reference.

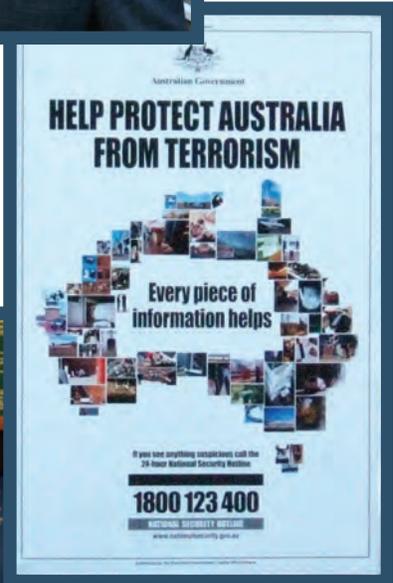
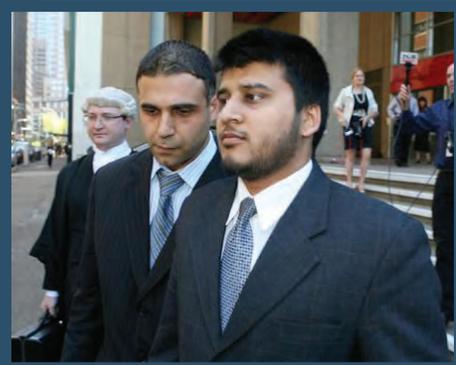
⁶² Yaxley, L. *Bronwyn Bishop calls for hijab ban in schools*, ABC 29 Aug 2005: <http://www.abc.net.au/worldtoday/content/2005/s1448343.htm>

⁶³ Bernardi, C. *For Australia's sake, we need to ban the burqa*, SMH, 06 May 2010: <http://bit.ly/1awajDn>

⁶⁴ Kelly, J. *Tony Abbott reopens debate on burka, wishes fewer Australians wore it*. The Australian, 4 Aug 2010: <http://bit.ly/d9jVKn>

⁶⁵ Karvelas, P. *Roxon balks at role for sharia by Australian Muslims*, The Australian, 17 Mar 2012: <http://bit.ly/yRHWUG>

⁶⁶ Packham, B. *Abbott condemns Melbourne University over sex segregation at Islamic events*, The Australian, 26 Apr 2013: <http://bit.ly/Y0TtVO>



SECTION IV

ANTI-TERROR LAWS, SPYING AND UNDERHANDED INTELLIGENCE TACTICS

The anti-terrorism laws form part of the 'hard-power' measures of Australia's National Security Strategy. These draconian laws are aimed at intimidating the Muslim community and making it possible to throw the full force of the law against Muslims with ideas deemed 'extreme' by lowering legal standards of evidence and conviction.

Outline of laws

As at 11 Sep 2001, Australia had more than thirty federal acts of legislation under which terrorist acts could be handled, as well as much relevant state legislation. Many regulatory and legislative amendments were made to these in the period from 2001-2003, leading up to the first new legislation in the form of the Anti-Terrorism Bill 2004.

This new bill provided for an extension of the fixed investigation period for suspected terrorism offences from 4 hours to 24 hours and allowed law enforcement agencies to suspend or delay questioning of a suspect to make relevant overseas inquiries. Its two subsequent amendments allowed government to proscribe organisations as terrorist and made it an offence to be a member of, associate with, provide training to or receive training from, any such proscribed organisation.

It also gave the AFP and ASIO the power to request an order for the surrender of passports and made decisions of the Attorney-General on security grounds exempt judicial review.

This new legislation had real potential for harsh implementation of powers and unfair targeting of minority groups, Muslims in particular. Yet it was passed without presentation of evidence to support the claim that these new provisions and powers were needed, without any real debate and without any consultation with stakeholders.

This was followed, in the following year, with even more draconian legislation with the Anti-Terrorism Act 2005, passed in December 2005. This act provided for control orders that allow the police to go before a closed court and ask for restrictions to be placed on someone who 'poses a terrorist risk'. Restrictions include restricting freedom of movement; freedom of association (including one's lawyer); banning the performing of named actions and owning named items, including actions and things necessary to earn a living; unlimited requirements to be, or not to be, at specified places at any or all times of the day and week; wear a tracking device; and including encouragement to submit to re-education.

It also made it a crime, punishable by life imprisonment, to recklessly provide funds to a potential terrorist ('financial terrorism'), whereby it is not necessary that the culprit know the receiver is a terrorist, only that the person is reckless about the possibility that they might be. This resulted in increased surveillance of Muslim charities and random raids and searches of Muslim charities in Sydney in 2008, resulting in no charges or convictions.

It also provided for preventative detention: short term detention for individuals, without evidence or criminal involvement, for up to 14 days. This was done notwithstanding that such a law was in contravention of the separation of powers doctrine and no clarification was presented as to what was sought to be prevented by these powers given that the AFP already possessed powers to arrest persons suspected on reasonable grounds for committing an offence.

It included tougher ASIO powers such as search warrants being valid for 3 months instead of only 28 days,

and introduced new ‘sedition’ laws, whereby it was a criminal offence for someone to incite violence against the community “in support of Australia’s enemies” or “urging disaffection” of the sovereign, the constitution, the government, the law. Measures for greater protection of free speech and greater scrutiny of the law’s application, proposed at different stages by individual members of the Government and Opposition were not accommodated.

It also provided for stop, question and search powers, extending police powers to stop anyone in the street, search them and ask them questions when police suspect a person might be about to commit a terrorist offence.

These two pieces of legislation were passed under the Howard Coalition Government, but with support from Labor. When Labor came to power in 2007 the laws remained as they were until 2010 when they underwent little more than cosmetic changes under the National Security Legislation Amendment Act 2010. In fact some provisions were expanded further.

This act expanded the definition of a ‘terrorist act’ in the Criminal Code to include psychological harm; provided police with new emergency powers to enter and search premises without a warrant where it is suspected that there is material relevant to a terrorism offence and there is a threat to public health or safety; extended the time available for police to re-enter a premises under a search warrant from one hour to 12 hours in emergency circumstances; introduced a new ‘terrorism hoax offence’, punishable by up to 10 years imprisonment; renamed the offence of sedition to ‘urging violence’ and expanding its provisions to include urging force or violence against an individual, not just a group, and including ‘national origin’, as well as race, religion, nationality or political opinion as a reason for urging violence.

In terms of ‘safeguards’ it established the National Security Legislation Monitor, modeled on Britain’s Independent Reviewer of Terrorism Laws, as an independent body with the task to consider whether legislation adequately protects public safety, without reducing public freedoms.

Critique of laws

The anti-terror laws have been subject to strong critique from former chief justices of the High Court and former prime ministers⁶⁷, peak law bodies⁶⁸, lawyers⁶⁹, human rights bodies, and many others individuals and groups. All the critique fell on deaf ears. Even Government reviews, of which there have been many, have advised repeal of many of the more controversial aspects of the legislations, but these too have all been ignored.

Most recently, the COAG *Counter-Terrorism Review of Counter-Terrorism Laws* and the *Independent National Security Legislation Monitor* second annual report were both tabled in Federal Parliament in May 2013. Both concluded that various aspects of the anti-terrorism legislations need repeal or change. The COAG review advised repeal of the offence of associating with a member of a terrorist organisation, narrowing the criteria for the banning of a terrorist organisation. The NSL Monitor report advised repeal of ASIO detention warrants, tightening the process for issue of ASIO questioning warrants, and repeal of the control order regime. All of this was again ignored by the Government.

⁶⁷ Pelly, Stepehns and Wilkinson, *Former leaders call for debate*, SMH, 25 Oct 2005: <http://bit.ly/1iDZb6l>

⁶⁸ *UK and US Slam Aussie terror laws*, Lawyers Weekly, 11 Nov 2005: <http://www.lawyersweekly.com.au/news/uk-and-us-slam-aussie-terror-laws>

⁶⁹ *‘Appalling’ anti-terror laws draw criticism*, ABC News, 27 Sep 2005: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2005-09-27/appalling-anti-terrorism-laws-draw-criticism/2112500>

On its part, the argument of the Government has been that the convictions achieved under the anti-terror laws justify these laws. This is a disingenuous and circular argument, for the convictions are only made possible due to the unjust laws. The vast majority of the 23 convictions made thus far, over the period of a decade, have been made on the flimsiest of grounds. The acts deemed 'terrorist' were only done so because the laws expand the meaning of 'terrorism' and lower the standards of evidence and conviction to such an extent that otherwise suspicious and irresponsible conduct at best and criminal conduct at worst is deemed 'terrorist'.

Indeed, such convictions were only possible courtesy of the exceptionally low legal standards delivered by the draconian laws. Standards that have done away with the requirement of a guilty act as well as a guilty mind. Standards that have done away with the need for solid evidence and ability to carry out a particular crime on part of the accused. Standards that suffice with mere 'evil intentions' and bits and pieces of circumstantial evidence used to prove mere intent to plan some undefined act at some undefined point in the future, with or without actually ability on part of the accused to carry it out.

In February 2010, for instance, five Sydney Muslim men were sentenced to harsh sentences of up to 28 years jail by the Supreme Court.⁷⁰ This was in spite of the fact that there was no direct evidence of any planned attack, no specific target, and no intent to kill could be established. The mere possibility of life being taken was deemed sufficient to pronounce them guilty, taking into consideration the 'extreme' views they held. Such a conviction was only possible due to the lowering of legal standards of conviction.

In the Holsworthy barracks case, three Melbourne Muslims were sentenced in December 2011 to 18 years jail even though they were not found guilty of committing any particular act, or even preparing for the commission of any particular act. Rather they were found guilty of 'extremist beliefs' and, based on circumstantial evidence, of conspiring to plan an act, that is, having the mere intention to plan an act – an act which, by the admission of the court, they had no proper ability to carry out.

Targeting Muslims

Although the anti-terror legislation is couched in neutral language, it is quite evident that it targets Muslims, and is one of the clear extraordinary policies specifically against the Muslim community. It should be plain to any impartial observer that this entire anti-terror legislation regime serves a political agenda, not merely a security one.

John Cobb, then Minister for Multicultural Affairs, was the first Howard Government minister to link the anti-terrorism laws to the Muslim community. Addressing a summit at the Melbourne Town Hall entitled Muslims in Australia — National Security and Harmony Summit in September 2005 he about why tougher measures were being introduced,

“...it is to do with the current terrorism and the fact that people who are practising it profess to be Muslims... They are aimed at the criminals and the lunatics in the world and it doesn't matter what they call themselves, that is all they are.”⁷¹

That the anti-terror laws were introduced to target Muslims primarily is also highlighted by the fact that just days before the legislation of 2005 was introduced the Government held a special briefing with the Muslim Community Reference Group at the Reference Group and Sub-Groups' meeting on 30 November 2005.⁷²

⁷⁰ Perry, M. *Five Australians jailed for jihad plot*, Reuters, 15 Feb 2010: <http://reut.rs/IRkiIH>

⁷¹ Jason, D. *Howard move on Muslim dialogue*, The Age, 11 Sep 2005: <http://bit.ly/1fr0ubP>

⁷² Muslim Community Reference Group Secretariat. *Briefing on the Anti-Terrorism Act 2005 and the Anti-Terrorism (No.2) Bill 2005 for the MCRG*, Department

The anti-terror laws have been introduced following terrorist attacks overseas which have been used to fan emotions of fear and anger in the community. The Anti-Terrorism Act 2005 was no different and needed justification in order to allow the proposed legislation to be passed. The AFP provided this justification, behind closed doors, by talking up impending threats which allowed the legislation to be rushed through parliament with little opposition or oversight.

“Well look, one of the reasons that these laws are proceeding is because the competent advisers to the Commonwealth- and that includes our security agency and also the Australian Federal Police- outlined the nature of the risk. A lot of that material is not in the public arena, but it was certainly outlined to them. They appreciated the sense of urgency surrounding these matters.” - Phillip Ruddock, Federal Attorney-General, Oct 2005.⁷³

“The reason that we have passed it through the House of Representatives is that we have been told by our law-enforcement agencies...that passing this law, making this change, would enhance the capacity of the law-enforcement agencies to deal with the situation...That information concerns me, and that information’s been shared with the Labor Party and, in general terms, with the state premiers, and it’s caused us to change the law.” - John Howard, Prime Minister, Nov 2005.⁷⁴

The anti-terror laws implicitly and specifically target Muslims. Of all the 18 organisations that have been proscribed as ‘terrorist’ organisations currently under the laws all are Muslim save but one. All those charged and prosecuted under the laws have been Muslim. Heavy handed raids have also been carried out against Muslim households.

Criminalising ideas

The intent is to intimidate the Muslim community and to criminalise ideas deemed ‘extreme’, thereby blurring the lines between legitimate Islamic political activism and terrorism. This aspect of the legislation has been noted by those who led its introduction and implementation.

“Let’s deal with the issue. It needs to be, the laws need to be updated, and we’ve known for a long time they needed to be updated. And maybe it should have been done earlier, but certainly in the context of the, of what we see *to be our inability to deal with extremist argument*, it seems appropriate that these measures should have been addressed in this law at this time.” - Philip Ruddock, Attorney-General, Sep 2005.⁷⁵ [Italics emphasis added]

Similarly Mick Keelty expressed that what is intended to be dealt with are ideas.

“What has become more difficult is that we’re fighting here an idea, or people who embrace an idea and who may never have come to the attention of law enforcement agencies before.” - Mick Keelty, then Commissioner of the Australian Federal Police, Oct 2005.⁷⁶

The anti-terror laws have sought to criminalise ideas and to put Islam itself on trial. We have seen in multiple cases the absurdity of Australian juries and judges passing judgment on what is and isn’t legitimate Islamic thought and ideas. We have seen words as imprecise and subjective as ‘extreme’ being used in a court of law to convict people and sentence them for life with no discussion or establishment of the criteria by which the ideas were deemed ‘extreme’.

of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs, 29 Nov 2005: http://www.immi.gov.au/media/publications/settle/_pdf/anti_terror_brief.pdf

⁷³ Jones, T. *Ruddock defends proposed counter-terrorism laws*, ABC, 27 Oct 2005: <http://www.abc.net.au/lateline/content/2005/s1492440.htm>

⁷⁴ Australian Associated Press. *Terror threat just a coincidence: PM*, The Age, 2 Nov 2005: <http://bit.ly/1fr1SuR>

⁷⁵ Oakes, L. *Interview: Philip Ruddock*, Ninemsn, 13 Nov 2005: <http://bit.ly/GSRKgm>

⁷⁶ Jones, T. *Keelty puts case for terrorism laws*, Australian Broadcasting Corporation, 31 Aug 2005: <http://www.abc.net.au/lateline/content/2005/s1494855.htm>

In the case of five Sydney Muslims convicted in October 2009 their carrying 'extreme' views was a key point used for the conviction. It was a case of ideas being criminalised and used as a substitute for solid and direct evidence. Many of the alleged 'extreme' views, as mentioned in the sentencing remarks, were basic Islamic views which Muslims generally hold, like Muslims being obliged to defend themselves against invasion and jihad being the way to do this.

In the Holsworthy barracks case too the sentencing judge emphasised in her sentencing remarks the "extremist views" of the accused whilst admitting the "amateurish" nature of their alleged plans.

Politicised implementation

The application of the laws is also highly politicised as demonstrated most poignantly by the famous case of Dr. Mohamed Haneef. Dr. Haneef was arrested in July 2007 alleged to have recklessly aided a terrorist organisation based on his giving a SIM card to a second cousin implicated in the Glasgow attacks of June 2007. He was detained without charge for 12 days under the 2005 Anti-Terrorism Act and kept in solitary confinement for 23hrs a day. The AFP even lied about his having no explanation as to why he had a one-way ticket to India.

Even after he was given bail because the case against him was extremely weak, Attorney-General Phillip Ruddock responded by cancelling his work visa on 'character grounds'. In the end all charges were dropped because there was simply no evidence of the alleged crimes. A later inquiry showed that the evidence against Dr. Haneef was 'completely deficient', that ASIO had told government 2 days after arrest that there was no information of him being guilty of anything, and that the Prime Minister's office became involved in the case within 48hrs of the arrest.

This is the deplorable reality of the way in which authorities apply the anti-terror laws.

Little doubt would remain then that these laws would be designed to instil fear and paranoia in sections of the Muslim community and hence have the desired affect for the government whereby Muslims avoid legitimate political dissent for fear of falling on the wrong side of the authorities or anti-terror laws and hence abandoning Islamic obligations to do with voicing opposition to the western military invasion of Muslim lands, calling for the comprehensive implementation of the *Sharia* in the Muslim lands and working towards the complete seizure of western interference in Muslim lands.

Spying and intelligence

Part of the 'hard-power' measures of counter-terrorism is the use of intelligence agencies, such as ASIO, to identify, monitor and assist law-enforcement in apprehending 'extremists'. With the lines between terrorism, violent extremism, and extremism increasingly being blurred, however, this role effectively means surveillance of large parts of the Muslim community.

John Howard justified spying in mosques and Islamic schools in 2005 under the pretext of counter-terrorism. When asked if he was prepared to "get inside" mosques and schools to ensure there was no support for terrorism, he said,

"Yes, to the extent necessary. I mean I have no desire and nor is it the Government's intention to interfere in any way with the freedom or practice of religion. But we have a right to know whether there is, within any section of the Islamic community, a preaching of the virtues of terrorism."⁷⁷

⁷⁷ PM to 'get inside' mosques and schools, The Age, 24 Aug 2005: <http://bit.ly/1aM00ra>

Since then unprecedented levels of surveillance of Muslims has been the order of the day. Indeed, it is no secret that the Australian intelligence services have imposed themselves upon the Muslim community. The community have been made to feel like criminals under the constant watchful eye of authorities.

The underhanded tactics used by the likes of ASIO against the Muslim community have come to public light to some extent in recent times.⁷⁸ They are nothing new for the Muslim community itself, however. These tactics have either been experienced or known by just about all in the community. Bullying, harassment, intimidation of people to “meet for a friendly chat”, entrapment, bribing, tapping private correspondences and like tactics have been occurring for a long time and everybody from Muslim activists, organisations, and mosque committees are all well aware of this reality.

The tactics employed by the likes of ASIO can only be described as dirty. It is no secret that they seek to infiltrate the Muslim community in various ways in order to monitor individuals and organisations, effectively criminalising the whole community and sowing the seeds of mistrust and suspicion between people.

In recent time there has been an expansion of ASIO’s role in ‘counter-extremism’ activities of engaging and using community leaders for their agenda and seeking to recruit Muslims as a means to use Muslims to spy on other the community.

In an address to the Australian Strategic Policy Institute, Robert McClelland, then Attorney-General, noted this expanded role of ASIO under the first focus area of counter extremism, ‘Identifying and Disrupting Violent Extremists’,

“Where possible, our primary objective must be to disengage extremists from violence. The Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (ASIO) is uniquely placed to contribute in this regard. ASIO can identify and engage with extremists, understand extremism, and counter extremist activities. Already, ASIO is conducting a variety of activities to help identify individuals and groups intent on acting on extremist beliefs. These range from constructive long term engagement with influential community and religious figures and associations, through to investigations relating to specific extremists or extremist threats.”⁷⁹

In a speech by ASIO boss David Irvine given on 24 January 2012 at the Sydney Institute, the Muslim spy recruitment drive was made public when he openly stated ASIO’s desire to recruit Muslims to spy on the Muslim community because of the ‘home-grown terror threat’ being “real and amongst us.” He said:

“ASIO needs to recruit more people from within our newly arrived migrant communities. And connected to this is the need for ASIO to develop even better outreach into our different ethnic communities, particularly Australian Muslim communities...My constant message to our valued Islamic community is very simple: ASIO is not against Islam, it is against terrorism; against terrorism that kills both Muslims and non-Muslims alike...To achieve our common goal of a safe and harmonious community, we need to work with you.”⁸⁰

The 2010 Counter-Terrorism White Paper also made mention of the desire to have communities working with law enforcement and security agencies:

Communities also play a leading role in rejecting extremist ideologies and supporting individuals who are at risk of marginalisation, or who might be attracted to the use of violent expression to achieve political, social or ideological goals. Communities can also assist our law enforcement and security agencies to help prevent acts of terrorism.⁸¹

⁷⁸ Zwartz, B. ASIO tactics creating fear in community, say Muslims, *The Age*, 18 Feb 2012: <http://bit.ly/wmdodX>

⁷⁹ McClelland, R. *Speech To The Australian Strategic Policy Institute*, Canberra, 21 Jul 2009: <http://bit.ly/17kiu5e>

⁸⁰ ABC News. *ASIO seeks to recruit Muslim spies*, Australian Broadcasting Corporation, 25 Jan 2012: <http://ab.co/xttiSp>

⁸¹ Australian Government, *Counter-Terrorism White Paper: Securing Australia – Protecting our Community*, Department of the Prime Minister and cabinet, 23 Feb 2010, p. 24: <http://bit.ly/GMkreB>



SECTION V

INTEGRATION, CITIZENSHIP AND VALUES: THE CREATION OF 'AUSTRALIAN MUSLIMS'

The push to integrate Muslims has been a permanent feature of the Australian Government's counter-terrorism policy throughout the last decade. In elucidating this, this chapter we will also look at what the government intends by 'integration' since the concept does not have one definition accepted by everyone but is used differently by different people. For some Muslims, integration simply means fitting in to society, whilst holding on to Islam, by adopting those aspects of its culture and practices which are allowed by Islam and hence is not something problematic in the first instance.

As will be shown, however, this is not what government intends by integration. Rather, what it intends is something more akin to assimilation. It intends that Muslims fit in to Australian society by leaving those aspects of Islam which do not accord with the modern secular liberal ideals upon which the society is based.

Integration

Integration of Muslims was of course state policy even before 2001, but in the post-9/11 era this policy was pushed with greater force, implemented more methodically and largely subsumed under counter-terrorism policy. The understanding was that Muslims who are well-integrated into mainstream Australian society and culture would be less prone to extremism and, in turn, terrorism.

Policymakers (and media) followed the flawed logic that the adherence by Muslims to Islam is directly proportional to the risk they pose to the safety and security of people in Australia – in effect tying issues of loyalty, citizenship and identity with that of terrorism. Thus we saw the creation of a new imposition of 'Australian values' – values which were pushed through Islamic schools by being tied to funding, impressed on imams and community leaders to adopt and preach, and generally imposed on Muslims to adopt.

Hand-in-hand with this came the concept of 'Australian Muslims' as those 'moderate Muslims' who practiced Islam 'in the Australian context', gave their overriding allegiance to Australia, adopting Australia values and did away with all those aspects of Islam deemed problematic in a secular liberal society such as Australia.

The first premature signs of instructing Muslim allegiance to the nation and its values appeared in 2002 when Prime Minister John Howard stated on Muslim Community Radio,

"We want all Australians to put their loyalty to this country first *above all other loyalties*. We respect people's religious differences, we respect the right of people to practise their religion without intimidation or interference or harassment, and we in fact respect the right of people to have no religious belief at all."
– John Howard, November 2002.⁸²

Addressing the 39th AFIC Annual Congress in April of the next year, he said,

"All Australians, regardless of their ethnic or cultural background, regardless of their faith, should participate fully in the wider Australian community- and show a commitment to our nation, its egalitarian values, its democratic institutions and its laws, *above all other commitments*." – John Howard, April 2003.⁸³

The campaign proper came in 2005 when the Australian Government instigated a blunt offensive aimed at coercing the Muslim community into subscribing to 'Australian values' and affirming an *overriding* allegiance

⁸² Howard, J. Transcript of the Prime Minister the Hon John Howard MP interview with Faten Dana, Radio 2MSM Sydney, Department of the prime Minister and Cabinet, 8 Nov 2002: <http://bit.ly/15ZYCn1>. The italics emphasis in this quote and all that follow in this chapter is ours.

⁸³ Howard, J. *Address to the 39th Annual Congress Australian Federation of Islamic Councils*, Department of the prime Minister and Cabinet, 12 Apr 2003: <http://pmtranscripts.dpmc.gov.au/browse.php?did=20543>

to Australia. In the name of social cohesion and harmony, this campaign was to set the foundation for a concerted policy of integrating Muslims into mainstream Australia. Muslims were told that as citizens they were expected to be a part of one family, Australia, which meant identifying themselves with the mainstream values that made the nation.

Prior to the first 'Muslim summit' organised by the Government in August 2005, John Howard was quite clear as to what he expected from the Muslim community with respect to values and allegiances, saying,

"I'll be putting to them the need for them to assume positions of leadership and responsibility within their own community. I'll be reminding them, as I remind all Australians, our common values as Australians *transcend any other allegiance or commitments* that we have...We're not in the business of renegotiating the values of this country to accommodate any minority, be it Islamic or otherwise." – John Howard, August 2005.⁸⁴

This is precisely what he did at the meeting the very next day. Addressing the Muslim community leaders invited to the summit at Parliament House in Canberra, he said,

"But my starting point is that we come together as Australians with an *overriding* loyalty to the future of this country *and to nothing else* and that we will work together as Australians with that *overriding* loyalty to try and prevent problems that have occurred in other countries..." – John Howard, August 2005.⁸⁵

Alexander Downer, then Foreign Minister, also emphasised the demand for an overriding loyalty to Australia,

"We vigorously respect people's rights to maintain and express their cultures and beliefs, within a framework of a commitment to Australia. We do expect everybody to have an *overriding* loyalty to Australia and to respect our basic structures and principals as contained in the constitution." – Alexander Downer, November 2005.⁸⁶

The Government was quite clear on the point that Muslims needed to change and adapt to the mainstream culture and values, in line with the concept of 'multiculturalism' it adopted,

"If multiculturalism simply means that we respect everybody, we want everybody to be an Australian first, second and third, but we also understand that people retain affections for their original cultures and countries, and that's perfectly normal and I think we enjoy it. And we want those other cultures to be part of our mainstream culture and we welcome that. Now if it means that we're all for it. If it means that we're going to encourage people to maintain their differences and that basically we have an attitude that well all cultures are equal, all cultures are the same, then I don't think people feel comfortable with that." - John Howard, February 2006.⁸⁷

Part of the values impressed upon the Muslim community are values that directly contradict the Islamic *aqidah* [creed]; values such as loyalty to the nation-state above the loyalty to Allah (swt), His Messenger (saw) and the Ummah, belief in a democratic government where man is placed sovereign over all affairs of legislation and belief in secularism.

Peter Costello, then Federal Treasurer, was quite direct and upfront in this regard, saying in a radio interview in February 2006,

⁸⁴ ABC News. *Muslim group unveils plan to tackle radicals*, Australian Broadcasting Corporation, 22 Aug 2005: <http://ab.co/19FStHI>

⁸⁵ Opening Remarks by the Prime Minister at the meeting of Islamic Leaders Parliament House, Canberra, 23 Aug 2005: <http://pmtranscripts.dpmc.gov.au/browse.php?did=21877>

⁸⁶ Downing, A. *Interfaith Dialogue, the Australian Approach*, Speech to the Centre for Muslim States and Societies, UWA, 21 Nov 2005: http://www.foreignminister.gov.au/speeches/2005/051121_centre_for_muslim_states.html

⁸⁷ PM Transcripts. *PM Transcript: Interview with Neil Mitchell Radio 3AW, Melbourne*, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, Feb 2006: <http://pmtranscripts.dpmc.gov.au/preview.php?did=22140>

"...they [Muslim leaders] should make a clear statement that they subscribe to all of these views- that they are loyal to Australia, they respect the rights and liberties of others, they believe in democratic government and they believe that all Australians should live unequivocally under the one law made by the Australian parliament - and endorse these values and recommend them to their followers...[they should] pledge themselves unequivocally to these values first of all, and then call on their followers to pledge themselves unequivocally to these values."

He went further to say that if one does not respect these values, then they should not enter the country,

"...if you go to a mosque you will be asked to take your shoes off as a sign of respect. Now if you don't want to take your shoes off then don't go to the mosque. And when you come to Australia you will be asked to subscribe to certain values – Australian values. If you don't want to subscribe to those values, don't come to Australia. This is what we ask of people. We have to preserve a way of life which makes us the greatest country in the world."⁸⁸

It is thus part of the government agenda to seek a secular Islam for Muslims, one in which religion is separate from politics, and to work for an 'enlightenment' in Islam on the model of Christianity. Current Prime Minister Tony Abbot, then Federal Minister for Health, noted,

"There never seems to have been the Islamic equivalent of the Enlightenment. Islam doesn't seem to have a well-developed concept of pluralism, and the separation of church and state. And pluralism and the separation of church and state are central to modern western society. So, this is an issue and it's something that all of us are going to have to work through together." – Tony Abbott, October 2006.⁸⁹

"Even so, the act of migration signifies at least an implicit willingness on each migrant's part to become part of a different society and to be changed by it...Traditionally minded people are entitled to argue for more modesty at the beach and less impulsiveness in relationships. Their children should be entirely free to accept or reject their point of view. Multiculturalism, after all, is a two-way street with the freedom to reject traditional ways as well as to keep them.

Several centuries after theocracy was rejected in the West, it can be a shock to find calls for sharia law in Australian places of worship. Still, it would be a big mistake to dismiss this as "un-Australian" rather than to begin the kind of engagement that eventually made Christianity less bloody. Indeed, talking to the more hard-line Muslims, rather than ostracising them or shouting them down, could be one of the greatest services Australia can render to the wider world. Why shouldn't the Muslim version of the Enlightenment and an Islamic doctrine of the separation of church and state be fostered in Australia? Especially as the task is so urgent." – Tony Abbott, February 2006.⁹⁰

Copious amounts of effort and resources have been expended in rolling out initiatives aimed at integrating Muslims, prominently beginning with the National Action Plan in 2005 implemented through the then Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs.

"The purpose of this National Action Plan (NAP) is to reinforce social cohesion, harmony and support the national security imperative in Australia by addressing extremism, the promotion of violence and intolerance, in response to the increased threat of global religious and political terrorism. It is an initiative of Australian governments to address issues of concern to the Australian community and to support Australian Muslims to participate effectively in the broader community."⁹¹

Among the aims of the NAP initiatives was to,

"...support educational and community programmes and projects encouraging loyalty and commitment by all Australians to their country, especially its parliamentary democracy and legal structures, and the

⁸⁸ Costello, P. *Australian citizenship - Interview with John Laws*, 2UE, 24 Feb 2006: <http://bit.ly/17lfekf>

⁸⁹ Uhlmann, C. *Abbott discusses religion in politics*, Australian Broadcasting Corporation, 31 Oct 2006: <http://www.abc.net.au/am/content/2006/s1777444.htm>

⁹⁰ Abbott, T. *Multiculturalism: the case for harmony*, The Age, 27 Feb 2006: <http://bit.ly/eL2dR8>

⁹¹ Australian Govt. Dept. of Immigration & Border Protection, *A National Action Plan to Build on Social Cohesion, Harmony and Security*, 2005: <http://bit.ly/1gy8oz7>

promotion of Australian values.”⁹²

Andrew Robb, as the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Immigration and Multicultural Affairs at the time, had the key role of leading the roll-out of this policy. Hence his statements in speeches, interviews and media releases are important in appreciating the intent of the Government with this policy.

In his address to over a hundred Imams summoned to attend the government’s *Conference of Australian Imams* he impressed the importance of secularism as the basis of society’s relationships between individuals and as a core value that contributes to the overriding culture of Australia forming one broad ‘family’,

“As I see it, the relationship anyone, of any faith, has with their god is a one-to-one relationship. It is a personal commitment. Yet, at the same time, we all must live in a world where we are part of a community, where we must have effective relationships with the other people who make up that community. It is a community commitment...In this regard, one of the most fundamental aspects of our democracy in Australia is the separation of church and state. We have created one broad family, with one overriding culture, based on those set of common values, but without denying people their roots.” – Andrew Robb, September 2006.⁹³

The intent with the idea of ‘one family’ is the unification of people around an overriding culture born out of a set of values, and in the case of Australia many of those values are in direct contradiction to Islamic values as illustrated above. Integration policies are an effort to draw a people into this ‘family’.

“Being very effective at integration, as distinct from assimilation, is an approach which has helped us successfully combine people from over 200 countries into one family, with one overriding culture — yet a family made up of a very diverse and rich set of communities drawn together by common values.”- Andrew Robb, April 2006.⁹⁴

“...the issue is that the Irish in Australia eventually became part of the team. Now, you know, that was partly, they moved, and it was partly, everyone else moved. And I think it’s important for Islamic people in Australia to become part of the team as well.” Tony Abbott, October 2006.⁹⁵

With respect to Muslims in particular, integration is a counter-extremism measure,

“Helping disadvantaged Australians, including some Muslim communities, become integrated and connected to mainstream Australia is the best way to prevent extremists getting a toehold in Australia.”- Andrew Robb, July 2006.⁹⁶

The means and styles used to ensure effective integration centred on distracting Muslims with sports, arts, social activities, involvement in civic organisations and the like. The idea is to have Muslims participate in social activities in order to build a disposition which inclines to the mainstream culture at the expense of carrying out Islamic obligations deemed problematic or possessing sentiments viewed by government as disloyal.

“There were lots of frustrations, lots of anger, there were things that should never have been said – there was discrimination, all of these things because Australians felt edgy about the arrival of these people from Italy and Greece. But as a community we worked through it.

As we worked together, studied together, played sport together, socialised together, you’d start to see

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Robb, A. *Address to the Conference of Australian Imams*, Sydney, 16 Sep 2006: <http://bit.ly/1agKJwR>

⁹⁴ Robb, A. *Australian Migrant Integration- Past Successes, Future Challenges*, Sydney Institute, 27 Apr 2006: <http://bit.ly/GKI0nQ>

⁹⁵ Abbott, T. *Multiculturalism: the case for harmony*, *The Age*, 27 Feb 2006: <http://bit.ly/eL2dR8>

⁹⁶ Robb, A. *Integration and Participation Aim of National Action Plan*, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Immigration and Multicultural Affairs, 16 Jul 2006: <http://bit.ly/1cFZbVg>

mutual respect grow; you'd see recognition of the strengths and new perspectives they brought. And the process of recognition was mutual. The respect was mutual. And we succeeded...

I will be working with some key Australian organisations, such as Surf Life Saving Australia, Royal Life Saving Australia, the Australian Sports Commission, the National Rugby League and Australian Football League, the Australia Council for the Arts as well as the Guides and Scouts to help create avenues for young Muslim Australians to fully participate in, and contribute to, the broader community. To truly integrate." – Andrew Robb, April 2006.⁹⁷

"The focus in achieving this must be heavily on education and employment, but involvement with sports, arts or social and civic organisations will also lead to the type of integration which gives people a clear sense of identity, and builds understanding and respect." - Andrew Robb, July 2006.⁹⁸

"...the Muslim Youth Aquatic Recreation Project, currently in the planning stages, was about integrating the Muslim community into mainstream community activities." - Andrew Robb, July 2006.⁹⁹

Interfaith dialogue is also part of the Government's integration push,

"...the funding would also be directed to projects such as an interfaith dialogue project to connect the Muslim community with Australians of other faiths..." - Andrew Robb, July 2006

The Government even went as far as using the Prophet's birthday to advertise the integration initiatives,

"Many Australians will be among the millions of Muslims worldwide celebrating the birth of the Prophet Mohammed this week...their members are actively involved in nationwide events and discussions to promote the Australian values of harmony, justice and democracy.

"Australian Muslims have shown their enthusiasm for interfaith dialogue, and civic and educational activities as ways of promoting social cohesion. They have successfully embraced Australia's customs and traditions while enjoying the freedom to celebrate their own traditional, cultural and religious practices." - Andrew Robb, April 2006.¹⁰⁰

The end-result sought from integration is the development of an 'Australian Muslim identity' whereby Muslims would identify themselves first and foremost with the 'Australian family' and the core values that form its basis.

"With the support of the existing leadership, the Australian Muslim communities are well placed to bring on this next generation of leaders, to lock in a strong Australian Muslim identity, which allows Muslims to get on with their lives, practice their faith and yet be an integral part of the Australian family." - Andrew Robb, August 2006.¹⁰¹

The idea, then, is that integration serves to build a cohesive and harmonious society as people are drawn into the one family by collectively subscribing to a set of values which form an overriding culture.

This policy of integration continued in much the same way, although with less forthright public articulation, under the Rudd Labor Government, which came to power in 2007, and continues till present.

The National Action Plan ran by DIAC continued as it was until 2010, from when its equivalent programs were run through the Federal Attorney-General's National Security Branch. Robert McClelland, as Australian Attorney-General from 2007-2011, led the design and implementation of this policy.

⁹⁷ Note 94

⁹⁸ Note 96

⁹⁹ Robb, A. *Integrating Australia's Muslim Community*, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Immi. & Multicultural Affairs, 1 Jul 2006: <http://bit.ly/GQr3IM>

¹⁰⁰ Robb, A. *Australians Mark the Prophet Mohammed's Birthday*, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Immigration, 11 Apr 2006: <http://bit.ly/GKlp9Q>

¹⁰¹ Robb, A. *Address to the Muslim Community Reference Group*, Rydges Capital Hill Canberra, 2 Aug 2006: <http://bit.ly/1gy9E5l>

In response to an AFIC submission in 2011 that some aspects of Islamic law – those dealing with individual and familial affairs such as marriage, divorce and inheritance – should be legally recognised he had the following to say,

“As our citizenship pledge makes clear, coming to Australia means obeying Australian laws and upholding Australian values. Australia’s brand of multiculturalism promotes integration. If there is any inconsistency between cultural values and the rule of law then Australian law wins out. People who migrate to Australia do so because of the fact that we have a free, open and tolerant society where men and woman are equal before the law irrespective of race, religious or cultural background. Indeed all applicants for citizenship swear a collective allegiance to the people of Australia and undertake to respect our customs and abide by our laws. The values underpinning those principles will not be changing.” – Robert McClelland, May 2011.¹⁰²

The current *Resilient Communities* website states,

“Many other government agencies also play an important role in taking action against violent extremism, directly through countering violent extremism programs targeted at those most at risk of radicalisation, and indirectly through broad integration and social cohesion activities implemented by social policy agencies.”
-The Resilient Communities government Website, 2013.¹⁰³

In reference to factors that contribute to radicalisation, the website notes:

“...identity issues, including the search for individual identity among apparently conflicting cultural reference points...”¹⁰⁴

The website also approvingly carries an abridged version of a talk delivered by Dr Mohamad Abdalla on the issue of identity.

“Don’t be afraid to say you are a Muslim and an Australian. Don’t be afraid to say that you are an Australian Muslim.

“...there is more to being Australian (than gambling, drugs etc)

- A love of sport – cricket rugby; soccer
 - Fairness, egalitarianism
 - Informality (take it easy mate; she’ll be alright...)
 - Sense of humour
 - Good Literature
 - Mateship – equality and friendship
 - Support for the weak
 - Support for the homeless
 - Support for the unemployed
- ...and so on.

“These are unique aspects of Australia and of being Australian. These values are also Islamic and support an ‘Islamic’ identity.” - Dr Mohamad Abdalla, ‘Advice to Australian Muslim Youth,’ February 2013.¹⁰⁵

Thus we see that under the guise of counter-terrorism, social inclusion and harmony values are being pushed onto Muslims - values which, whilst being characterised as neutral and universal, are deeply ideological, being based in western secular liberalism. Many of these values contradict Islam in its fundamentals and/or

¹⁰² Karvelas, P. *Attorney-General Robert McClelland says there is ‘no place’ for sharia law in Australia*, The Australian, 17 May 2011: <http://bit.ly/jv38QB>

¹⁰³ Australian Government. *Government, Resilient Communities*, 2013: <http://bit.ly/GQrvqv>

¹⁰⁴ Australian Government. *The Threat to Australia*, Resilient Communities, 2013: <http://bit.ly/1bkJHSR>

¹⁰⁵ Abdalla, M. *Advice to Australian Muslim Youth*, Resilient Communities, 4 Feb 2013: <http://bit.ly/1g87oUw>

details. Muslims are being pushed to leave those aspects of Islam which are problematic from the secular liberal perspective, make necessary changes to come up with a moderate Australian Islam – one that is secular, politically impotent and localised – and thereby join the mainstream Australian 'family'.

Citizenship

Citizenship was also used by the Howard Government to impress 'Australian values' on Muslims and push them to commit to an *overriding* loyalty to Australia.

Unprecedented changes to citizenship were made in 2007, bucking the trend of amendments to citizenship in the five decades prior which sought to make it easier to acquire.¹⁰⁶ Howard's changes – made evidently because Muslims were thought not to be integrating and deemed a security risk – went the other way. They increased the residence requirement from two to four years and introduced a citizenship test and a values statement.

The adoption of a more rigorous citizenship process is a reflection of the shift away from the traditional approach to multiculturalism towards one that emphasises integration of migrants into the mainstream culture of the country whilst keeping the less controversial aspects of their original cultures.

The debate began on the issue of multiculturalism in the context of the Government's perceived problems with the Muslim community.

"Debate over multiculturalism came to the fore in the middle of the decade, particularly in regard to Muslim Australians and the proposed introduction of a more rigorous citizenship test. The September 11 terrorist attacks in the United States, bombings in Bali, high profile rape cases in Sydney involving men from families of Lebanese background and racially motivated riots in Cronulla in 2005 became focal points for public debate over assimilation, immigration, racism and a perceived conflict between Islam and 'mainstream' Australian values."¹⁰⁷

In September 2006, the Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs released a discussion paper on the introduction of a citizenship test, in the foreword to which, then Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Immigration and Multicultural Affairs, Andrew Robb, stated,

"Australia has successfully combined people into one family with one overriding culture, based on a set of common values. These values include our respect for the freedom and dignity of the individual, support for democracy, our commitment to the rule of law, the equality of men and women, the spirit of the fair go, of mutual respect and compassion for those in need.

"The Government believes it is important that immigrants...understand the Australian way of life and our shared values and demonstrate a commitment to contributing to that way of life and accepting those values."¹⁰⁸

In January 2007 the Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs was renamed the Department of Immigration and Citizenship, reflecting the above-mentioned shift. In October that year a new citizenship test, modelled on the test in the UK adopted in 2005, was introduced. The test examines applicants understanding of English and basic knowledge of Australia's history, culture and values.

¹⁰⁶ Klapdor, Coombs and Bohm, *Australian citizenship: a chronology of major developments in Policy and Law*, Parliamentary Library Background Note, 2009: www.citizenship.gov.au/_pdf/cit_chron_policy_law.pdf

¹⁰⁷ Ibid, p. 17.

¹⁰⁸ Australian Government, *Australian citizenship: much more than a ceremony*, Discussion paper, Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs, September 2006, p. 5: <http://nla.gov.au/nla.arc-64133>.

A new values statement, which applicants for permanent and long-term temporary visas must sign, was also adopted. The statement obligates migrants to respect certain listed Australian values such as freedom and dignity of the individual, freedom of religion, commitment to the rule of law, parliamentary democracy, and equality of men and women; to understand that they will be entering into a shared identity and common bond with all Australians; and pledge loyalty to “Australia and its people”.¹⁰⁹

Then Minister of Immigration Kevin Andrews described the new approach as one seeking a ‘socially cohesive society’ as opposed to a multicultural one,¹¹⁰ and explained the introduction of changes to citizenship rules as a means to ensure that citizens commit to Australia and its way of life.

“The central principle behind such a test and statement is to ensure that those people who wish to become Australian citizens do so by way of demonstrating a level of understanding and commitment to Australia and our way of life. This way of life is influenced by a history that includes the Judeo Christian beliefs and traditions brought by the British settlers. Also present were the values and institutions that form the basis of a free and open democratic society, particularly our British political heritage, and the spirit of the European Enlightenment.” – Kevin Andrews, July 2007.¹¹¹

The references here to Judeo-Christian belief, democracy and the Enlightenment are not random. They are made with intent, as the main targets of these changes were Muslims.

He also emphasised the underlying objective of the changes: integration.

“Our immigration program remains robust and for the reasons already outlined, it is important that this does not change in the foreseeable future. However, we must ensure that the program does not undermine a cohesive and integrated society. Our Western liberal democracy and the values, beliefs and traditions that have made this country great and worth standing up for and they are worth preserving. For this reason, I believe Australians are supportive of a citizenship test and the requirement for migrants to demonstrate a capacity and willingness to integrate into the Australian way of life.”¹¹²

Thus with a few quick and purposeful changes the Howard Government imposed upon Muslim migrants various actions that contradict Islam: respecting non-Islamic values such as liberal freedoms, pledging loyalty to a nation-state and committing to a way of life based on Judeo-Christian and secular ideals.

Although it is commonly believed that the push away from multiculturalism was a Coalition policy and that Labour was different, in practice the Rudd Labour Government, apart from making nominal changes to the citizenship test based on a review¹¹³ in 2008, affirmed all the changes made by the Howard Government and used them in the same way. The new multiculturalism policy¹¹⁴ released in 2011 also expressed the same essential idea of Australia being a society which is ‘socially cohesive’ but culturally diverse.

The following quote from Robert McClelland, in response to AFIC’s proposal for ‘legal pluralism’ such that personal law aspects of Shariah law be legally recognised, demonstrates the essentially similar nature of the Labor and Coalition approach.

“As our citizenship pledge makes clear, coming to Australia means obeying Australian laws and upholding

¹⁰⁹ Australian Government, Department of Immigration and Border Protection, *Australian Values Statement – Provisional and Permanent*: <http://www.immi.gov.au/living-in-australia/values/statement/long/>

¹¹⁰ *Citizenship test unveiled*, Sydney Morning Herald, 26 Aug 2007: <http://bit.ly/19p1Wr0>

¹¹¹ Andrews, K. Citizenship: Committing to a Way of Life [online], *The Sydney Papers*, vol. 19, no. 3, winter 2007, p. 154.

¹¹² *Ibid*, p. 158

¹¹³ Australian Citizenship Test Review Committee, *Moving forward...improving pathways to citizenship* (R Woolcott, chair), ACTR Committee, 2008.

¹¹⁴ Australian Government, Department of Immigration and Citizenship, *The People of Australia – Australia’s Multicultural Policy*, 2011: <http://bit.ly/ew2sNu>

Australian values. Australia's brand of multiculturalism promotes integration. If there is any inconsistency between cultural values and the rule of law then Australian law wins out. People who migrate to Australia do so because of the fact that we have a free, open and tolerant society where men and woman are equal before the law irrespective of race, religious or cultural background. Indeed all applicants for citizenship swear a collective allegiance to the people of Australia and undertake to respect our customs and abide by our laws. The values underpinning those principles will not be changing." – Robert McClelland, May 2011.¹¹⁵

¹¹⁵ Karvelas, P. *Attorney-General Robert McClelland says there is 'no place' for sharia law in Australia*, The Australian, 17 May 2011: <http://bit.ly/jv38QB>



SECTION VI

CHANGING ISLAM: THE QUEST FOR A MODERATE, AUSTRALIAN ISLAM

The Australian Government has stated in unequivocal terms those aspects of Islam it considers the antithesis to Australian values. It has, in turn, undertaken measures to normalise the adoption of, and adherence to, an Islam devoid of key Islamic values and concepts.

Policymakers recognise that Islam is a comprehensive and unique ideology that seeks to challenge the existing orders, established by the West, prevalent in Muslim lands. Tony Blair alluded to this in his speech to the Australian Parliament in March 2006,

“Their case is that democracy is a western concept we are forcing on an unwilling culture of Islam. The problem we have is that a part of opinion in our own countries agrees with them.”¹¹⁶

There is an overt effort to detach key Islamic ideas from Muslims. This is done by on the one hand supporting, financing and promoting key non-Islamic ideas, such as secularism and liberal freedoms, as being Islamic and on the other hand by targeting, challenging and characterising key Islamic ideas, such as ultimate sovereignty being for Allah alone, the *Khilafah*, the implementation of *Shariah*, and *Jihad*, as being non-Islamic and extreme.

The means employed for this are various: establishing state-funded Islamic studies centres, training Imams and other community leaders in Australian values, establishing Islamic Studies curricula to be taught at primary and secondary Islamic schools, and funding programs within the community that aim to ‘challenge extremist ideology’. Whatever the means, these efforts are all channeled towards one objective; altering the understanding of Islam by stripping away ideas that clash with the secular liberal nation-state framework to which Australia subscribes.

‘Islam in an Australian context’

This was done by introducing the concept of teaching and practicing ‘Islam in an Australian context’.

John Howard and Brendan Nelson first introduced the idea. In the press conference following John Howard’s famous meeting with Muslim leaders in Parliament House, Canberra, in August 2005, he noted,

“There is a problem, there is a concern and it’s shared in the Islamic Community that there is not a sufficient Australian perspective felt and conveyed by some of the imam’s. And that’s why this issue is raised initially by Dr Nelson, and is one we’re going to take forward.”¹¹⁷

From 2006, and corresponding largely with the announcements to establish a government-funded university Islamic Studies centre, the Government began to push this idea of ‘Islam in an Australian context’ to be taught to the community, particularly to students, religious leaders and aspiring ‘home-grown’ Imams – as the following articulations show (*italics emphasis ours*).

“The courses will provide many subjects relevant for those training to be Muslim religious leaders, providing an important vehicle for the teaching of *Islam in an Australian context*, applying the usual academic rigour of the Australian university system. This will be particularly helpful to young Australian Muslims who want to understand the role of religion in Australia. It will also help religious leaders and teachers understand the context within which their adherents practice their faith. The centre will attract eminent, moderate Islamic scholars from around the world who will provide an authoritative community reference point.” Andrew Robb, July 2006¹¹⁸

“Local training of Imams would be greatly assisted by the creation of a world class Institute of Islamic Studies, established within a prominent Australian university. Such an institute would attract eminent,

¹¹⁶ The Guardian. *Tony Blair’s Speech to the Australian Parliament*, *The Guardian*, 27 Mar 2006: <http://bit.ly/1g4A7bQ>

¹¹⁷ Howard, J. *Joint Press Conference with Dr Ameer Ali President, Australian Federation of Islamic Councils Parliament House, Canberra, 23 Aug 2005*: <http://pmtranscripts.dpmc.gov.au/browse.php?did=21878>

¹¹⁸ Bishop, J. & Robb, A. *\$8m for Centre Excellence for Islamic Education National Action Plan, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Immigration and Multicultural Affairs*, 16 Jul 2006: <http://bit.ly/Hap2qX>

moderate Islamic scholars who would provide an authoritative community reference point; scholars capable of expanding the circle of reference for the impressionable — those young Muslims questioning their identity, challenged by the question of “who am I?”

Australia can provide a bridge between the West and many of those countries in the region with large Muslim populations. It will also help to put *Islam into an Australian context*. *Many Muslim young people have grown up in Australia and some of the teachings of Islam and the customs of some Islamic countries have no relevance for them. Or that’s what I’m hearing from them.*” - Andrew Robb, April 2006¹¹⁹

“Religious leaders from these communities may therefore be inappropriately trained, in some cases, to meet the needs of their congregation in an Australian environment. Action under the National Action Plan (NAP) could include: providing professional development opportunities *in an Australian context*, which will promote greater understanding of Australian values and culture.” - Department of Immigration and Citizenship website.¹²⁰

“My Religion, Our Country: a Resource for Islamic Religious Education in Australia is designed for teachers of Islam in an Australian context. The aim is to identify in broad terms, against the back-stop of Australian law, the issues that underpin life in a harmonious, multi-faith, cohesive, multicultural society and make explicit the links between those issues and the teachings of *Islam in an Australian context*.”¹²¹

Muslim academics affiliated with these government programs also used the language.

“The Centre will be instrumental in graduating students who are well-versed in both the Australian and Islamic contexts- a necessary requirement for bridging the gap between the two cultures.” - Dr Mohamad Abdalla, January 2007.¹²²

“It will also function as an important think tank in relation of Islamic issues particularly in the Australian context.” – Abdullah Saeed, January 2007.¹²³

“...and one of the dilemmas that the Imams have had in the past was having perhaps representatives, be they spokesperson or otherwise, who are not able to articulate the, I guess, the needs and the requirements of Islam and the Muslims within a socioeconomic political Australian context...I think that is the underlying point. In the past I think we have failed to look at the idea of contextualisation. How can we look at Islamic law and Islamic thought in a way that allows the Muslims to work with, and not in confrontation with, the system and the context that we live in.” – Dr. Mohamad Abdalla, spokesperson for ANIC, March 2007.¹²⁴

Dr. Mohamad Abdalla was the vice-president and spokesperson for the Australian National Imams Council (ANIC) at the time as well the Islamic Studies Program Director at the Griffith Islamic Research Unit, which was the Queensland node of the National Centre for Excellence in Islamic Studies (NCEIS) and which had the same objective of promoting ‘moderate Islam’.

“The core element of this program area is the Griffith Islamic Research Unit (GIRU), which was established in 2004 as part of the Key Centre to encourage research on issues that relate to Islam and the Muslims in an Australian context. The central aim of GIRU is to promote a Wasatiyya or “moderate” Islam, and a true understanding of Islam and Muslims.” – The Owl’s Beak, Griffith University newsletter, 2007.¹²⁵

“The aim of Griffith University’s Islamic research unit, established in 2005, is to promote a balanced and contextualised understanding of Islam and Muslims.” – Ian O’Connor, then Vice-Chancellor of Griffith University, April 2008.¹²⁶

¹¹⁹ Robb, A. *Australian Migrant Integration — Past Successes, Future Challenges*, The Sydney Institute, 27 Apr 2006: <http://bit.ly/GKI0nQ>

¹²⁰ Australian Government, Department of Immigration, *A National Action Plan to Build on Social Cohesion, Harmony and Security*, 2005: <http://bit.ly/1gy8oz7>

¹²¹ Community Relations Commission. *My Religion, Our Country: A Resource For Islamic Religious Education in Australia*, Department of Immigration and Citizenship: <http://bit.ly/1gSMadJ>

¹²² *Three-state university consortium wins bid for \$8m National Centre of Excellence for Islamic Studies*, The University of Melbourne, 22 Jan 2007: <http://archive.uninews.unimelb.edu.au/view-63725.html>

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Crittenden, S. *The Mufti of Australia?*, ABC’s *The Religion Report*, 28 Mar 2007: <http://ab.co/HkbclZ>

¹²⁵ Griffith University. *The Owl’s Beak – Highlights of 2007, Key Centre for Ethics, Law, Justice and Governance, 2007*, pg. 14: <http://bit.ly/1im2izX>

¹²⁶ O’Connor, I. *Islam and the West need to engage*, *The Australian*, 24 Apr 2008: <http://bit.ly/1gSU4Uw>

The NCEIS

The National Centre of Excellence for Islamic Studies (NCEIS) was established in 2007 with \$8m of funding from the Howard Government. It was a major development in the efforts of the Australian Government to promote a state-sanctioned version of Islam. One of the stated aims of the centre was to produce home-grown Imams and Muslim leaders well versed in this 'moderate' version of Islam.

Andrew Robb described the centre's objectives as Islam finding its place in modern society. In other words, how to refine Islam so that it can exist in the modern secular liberal context.

"The creation of a world class centre of research and educational excellence in Islamic studies within a major Australian university, to play a leadership role in exploring the place of Islam in modern society." Andrew Robb, August 2006.¹²⁷

The centre was a government initiative, funded by government and with objectives set by government.

"The negotiation of a funding agreement will include a requirement for the Centre to adhere to a clear set of objectives, against which it will report annually." – Minister for Education media release, January 2007.¹²⁸

The centre was modelled on the Centre for Muslim-Christian Understanding at Georgetown University in Washington as a think-tank on Islamic issues advising the government and facilitating Muslim integration, as explained by Andrew Robb, then Vocational and Further Education Minister, at the launch of the centre in October 2007.

"I found the governments in the United States relied heavily on the wisdom and the insights of a lot of those scholars of all religious backgrounds who have benefited from understanding one another. And that meant within the US, they are making more balanced decisions and helping the integration of Muslim members of their community in an effective way."¹²⁹

The launch of the centre was attended by university administrators, academics, politicians and Muslim community leaders such as the then Mufti.

"On Tuesday 23 October, Professor Paul Mazerolle, represented the (Griffith) University at the official launch of the National Centre of Excellence in Islamic Studies which was held at the University of Melbourne. Professor Mazerolle joined University of Melbourne Vice-Chancellor, Professor Glyn Davis to celebrate this milestone, along with Commonwealth Government Minister for Vocation and Further Education, Andrew Robb MP, Professor Abdullah Saeed, Director of the Centre, and the Mufti of Australia, Sheikh Fehmi Naji El-Imam." The Owl's Beak, Griffith University newsletter, 2007.¹³⁰

The centre was even welcomed by the Jewish community leaders, evidently because the goals of the centre pleased those who had an interest to see the Islam reformed and moderated.

Executive Council of Australian Jewry (ECAJ) president Grahame Leonard said the initiative, which has the backing of the Federal Government "has objectives we very much applaud".

Leonard said the appointment of Professor Abdullah Saeed, an acclaimed Islamic educator at the University of Melbourne, as the centre's director "is comforting and a good appointment... we have had dealings with him and find him to be a moderate".¹³¹

¹²⁷ Robb, A. *Address to the Muslim Community Reference Group, Rydges Capital Hill Canberra, 2 Aug 2006*: <http://bit.ly/1gy9E5I>

¹²⁸ Bishop, J. & Robb, A. *Media Release - National Centre of Excellence for Islamic Studies, Dept. of Education, 22 Jan 2007*: <http://bit.ly/1a8K2or>

¹²⁹ Australian Associated Press. *Islamic Studies 'Will Counter Ignorance', The Sydney Morning Herald, 23 Oct 2007*: <http://bit.ly/19iU5sQ>

¹³⁰ Griffith University. *The Owl's Beak - Highlights of 2007, Key Centre for Ethics, Law, Justice and Governance, 2007, pg. 19*: <http://bit.ly/1im2izX>

¹³¹ *Jewish leaders welcome new \$8 million Islamic studies centre, Australian Jewish News, 25 January 2007.*

The choice of those who led the NCEIS is also indicative of the objectives of the centre. Abdullah Saeed and Shahram Akbarzadeh have been Director and Deputy Director of the centre from the beginning in 2007 till present.

Abdullah Saeed is openly secular. He believes that Australia is already an Islamic country and favourably views the belief that there is “no problem at all in living as good, committed, practising Muslims within a non-Muslim legal framework and among non-Muslims”, that “there is no need for Muslims to follow classical Islamic law, including family law, if this is not in line with existing Australian law”, and that, “Islam is primarily a relationship between an individual and God, a relationship based on a set of ethical-moral values and norms, and that this can be practised anywhere where there is religious freedom and justice,” irrespective of whether one lives under Islamic law or non-Islamic law.¹³²

He also advocates “re-reading” the Qur’an as a means for Muslims to “embrace modernity”.¹³³ He is the author of “Focus on Islam in Australia”, a book published in 2003 in which Professor Saeed emphasises the need, in his view, for the Muslim community “to demonstrate that commitment to Islam does not jeopardise their commitment to Australia and its core values”, even to the extent of changing aspects of Islam, as he notes,

“The challenge for religious leaders is justifying this commitment theologically and religiously. This may require rethinking of some positions taken in classical Islamic law in relation to these core Australian values.”
- Abdullah Saeed, June 2003.¹³⁴

Shahram Akbarzadeh adopts similar views. He believes in re-interpreting Islam, that secular British and Australian law is already Islamic¹³⁵, and that the majority of Muslims want secular law.¹³⁶

The centre even went as far as having a reformist lesbian academic teach a course- Women in Arabic and Islamic Literature- wherein she promoted reforming Islam by changing its position on homosexuality. Dr Samar Habib,

“...received her doctorate from the University of Sydney, Australia. Her monograph *Female Homosexuality in the Middle East: Histories and Representations* was published by Routledge in 2007...Her *Islamic Texts on Female Homosexuality 850-1700 AD* was published by Teneo Press in 2009. Her critical translation of the Lebanese novel *Ana Hiya Anti / I Am You* by Elham Mansour was published in 2008.”¹³⁷

Dr Habib also promoted her new book *Arabo-Islamic Texts on Female Homosexuality, 850 - 1780 A.D* to her UWS ‘Muslim Harmony Group’ colleagues. The book’s synopsis notes,

“The question of gay and lesbian human rights in the Muslim world is a topical and pressing one, and the need now for alternative ways of approaching Islam in the modern world is more important than ever. The answers to today’s modern crisis in human rights for LGBTIQ people lies in looking at the past and highlighting elements that can assist in the creation of a more equitable future. This publication discovers and brings to the English reader an array of surviving texts penned by Muslim scholars discussing female same-sex desire. From the tolerant days of the Abbasid caliphate to the celebratory text of Yusuf Tifashi in the thirteenth century and onwards toward growing strictures and greater intolerance, *Arabo-Islamic Texts* reveals a dynamic and lively discourse on sexuality in the Arabo-Islamic empire.”¹³⁸

¹³² Saeed, A. *Muslims don’t need separate laws*, *The Australian*, 9 Apr 2008: <http://bit.ly/1eXKGu8>

¹³³ Saeed, A. *The case for religious liberty: Re-reading the Qur’an*, *ABC Religion & Ethics*, 19 Aug 2013: <http://ab.co/16XV0xR>

¹³⁴ UniNews. *Focus on Islam in Australia*, *The University of Melbourne*, Jun 2003: <http://bit.ly/HnoWNo>

¹³⁵ Akbarzadeh, S. *Reinterpreting Islam*, *Eureka Street*, 1 Apr 2008: <http://bit.ly/1hkWjOa>

¹³⁶ Akbarzadeh, S. *Muslim majority wants secular law*, *The Australian*, 15 Apr 2008: <http://bit.ly/18rDFfr>

¹³⁷ School of Humanities and Communication Arts. *Dr. Samar Habib*, *The University of Western Sydney*: <http://bit.ly/WLoQnR>

¹³⁸ Habib, S. *Arabo-Islamic texts on female homosexuality : 850-1780 A.D.*, Teneo Press New York, 2009: <http://bit.ly/16eNH6W>

This episode registered a qualified objection by the Australian National Imams Council, which said in a statement,

“The University of Western Sydney is a University of good repute amongst the mainstream and Muslim community, and therefore we would like to place on the record our deep concern with regards to a course taught at the University under the course name ‘Women in Arabic and Islamic Literature’... The subject’s emphasis on sexuality and its explicit sexual content is not reflective of normative Islam which is what we thought the National Centre of Excellence in Islamic Studies would attempt to portray.” - Shaykh Moez Nafti, President of ANIC, April 2008.¹³⁹

Director Abdullah Saeed, however, responded,

“Everyone has a right to express their opinion and views and that is what is happening. One of the essential things is to uphold academic freedoms and intellectual freedoms of students and the staff.”¹⁴⁰

Secularising Islam

Policymakers leading the development and implementation of counter-extremism and integration policies have also been quite clear about their seeking to change Islam.

Laurie Ferguson, then Parliamentary Secretary for Multicultural Affairs, noted in March 2008 in quite clear terms his objection to the “unthinking adherence to what the Quran says” and his preference that the Quran’s reading be adapted to the modern secular society. In response to a question as to whether it was wise that he had introduced Tariq Ramadan at the government-funded Griffith University Islamic Research Unit’s first international conference he said,

“No, well his detractors have made certain allegations against him. I actually didn’t listen to the detractors, I went and heard him. I introduced him, but I didn’t walk out the door straight afterwards, I heard him speak, and I am confirmed in a view that he is a force for the better. It is very rare that Islamist fundamentalists advocate that their students should go to the secular education system rather than religious schools. I thought his whole message was that *Muslims in the West have to adapt to that society*, his view is not one of kind of *total unthinking adherence to what the Qur’an says, his view is about adaptation...* I think this guy was worthwhile, I defend totally my decision to introduce him. I think he’s got a good message.”¹⁴¹ [Italics emphasis ours]

In Andrew Robb’s address to over a hundred Imams at the *Conference of Australian Imams* in September 2006, he charged the Imams with the task of demonstrating to their congregation that Islam and the western way of life are not in conflict. He then went further to criticise and label as extremist those that take as their reference the Prophet’s, peace be upon him, 7th century era,

“As the spiritual leaders of Australian Muslims you carry major responsibilities. In some ways those responsibilities are daunting, but they are also rich with opportunity: the opportunity for you to demonstrate that the true expression of Islam is not in conflict with a western way of life...

“The extremists want to take the Muslim community back to the 7th Century. But, there are many hundreds of millions of other Muslims supportive of democracy, who are economic modernisers, who want to see Islam regain its long lost prominence in world sciences, the arts, in commerce.”¹⁴²

¹³⁹ ANIC. *Women In Arabic And Islamic Literature Subject: National Centre of Excellence in Islamic Studies*, 24 Apr 2008: <http://bit.ly/16XEFbH>

¹⁴⁰ O’Brien, N. *Imams condemn Islamic teacher*, The Australian, 3 May 2008: <http://bit.ly/17m8fxl>

¹⁴¹ Crittenden, S. *A new Muslim Community Reference Group?*, ABC’s The Religion Report, 26 Mar 2008: <http://ab.co/1aMLWMA>

¹⁴² Robb, A. *Address to the Conference of Australian Imams*, Sydney, 16 Sep 2006: <http://bit.ly/1agKJwR>

In perhaps the most telling example of policymakers' desire to see Islam change, Peter Costello, then Federal Treasurer, in an address to the Christian Lobby National Conference in September 2006 expressed plainly his wish for the Muslims to take Mustafa Kemal Attaturk as their example in adopting the secular nation-state construct despite the Prophet's example being in complete contradiction to this.

"The Prophet Muhammad was also persecuted for his religious teaching. From Mecca he was put to flight to Medina. There he gathered supporters, formed an army, led it in battle, defeated those that had forced him out, and conquered Mecca. He became Head of State. 'As such he governed a place and a people, dispensed justice, collected taxes, commanded armies, waged war and made peace.' His teachings cover how and when to fight military battles.

"Early Islamic history is quite different from early Christian history. From the outset Islam instituted government. Establishing the rule of Islam in Mecca was seen as the intervention of God. It was a victory won by military force.

"This does not mean there is no experience of a secular state separate from the religious domain in the Muslim world. The most outstanding example would be the establishment of modern Turkey out of the old Ottoman Empire. Mustafa Kemal Atatrk [sic], well known in Australia as the Commander of the Turkish victory at Gallipoli in 1915 went on to found modern Turkey as a secular state – a path he believed would lead to modernity. In this regard he is one of the great leaders of the Twentieth Century. He should be held out as a model of leadership for the modern Islamic world.

The separation of the state from religion liberates both. It preserves freedom for religion. It liberates the church from the baggage of unpopular and difficult political decision making. It liberates the State from the religious dogma which at times, has held back scientific progress.

"I believe, that a secular national state can be adopted by Muslim societies and, what is more, that doing so will lead to greater technological and economic progress."¹⁴³

Current Prime Minister Tony Abbott too, then Federal Minister for Health, was clear about the objective of secularising Islam,

"There never seems to have been the Islamic equivalent of the Enlightenment. Islam doesn't seem to have a well-developed concept of pluralism, and the separation of church and state. And pluralism and the separation of church and state are central to modern western society. So, this is an issue and it's something that all of us are going to have to work through together." - Tony Abbott, October 2006.¹⁴⁴

This notion of contextualising Islam and Muslims has also been propagated within the Muslim community through projects funded by the government as part of counter-extremism efforts. June 2012, for instance, saw the *Contextualising Australian Muslims Summit 2012*, with a keynote from Aftab Malik who is "an advisory board member of the British Council's "Our Shared Future" project based in Washington, DC and a UN Alliance of Civilizations global expert on Muslim affairs."¹⁴⁵

Thus we see a concerted effort by the government to change Islam from what it is – a complete way of life with its own worldview, including an ideological and political outlook distinct from that of western secular liberalism – to one that leaves off those aspects which conflict with secular liberalism. A secularised Islam which informs the theology and morals of Muslims but not their politics and ideology more broadly. This state-sanctioned version of Islam is promoted as 'moderate Islam' and 'Australian Islam' and 'contextualising Islam' is the cover used to justify it.

¹⁴³ Costello, P. *Address To Australian Christian Lobby National Conference*, National Press Club, 23 Sep 2006: <http://bit.ly/1dAgebO>

¹⁴⁴ Uhlmann, C. *Abbott discusses religion in politics*, Australian Broadcasting Corporation, 31 Oct 2006: <http://www.abc.net.au/am/content/2006/s1777444.htm>

¹⁴⁵ *Contextualising Australian Muslims Summit 2012*, Lebanese Moslems Association Youth leadership Program, Jun 2012: <http://on.fb.me/16eOOni>

Targeting Islamic ideas

The stated target of counter-terrorism policy is violence as well as the ideas believed to lead to violence. Originally, after 9/11, the overwhelming focus was on the former but with time that focus has shifted to the latter; targeting 'extreme' ideas is now a major part of counter-terrorism policy. Violence, of course, is easily identifiable; the ideas leading to it not so. This is where the policy takes on ideological colour as policymakers tie various ideas, many of them Islamic, with violence and terrorism, and make them a target for critique, attack, demonisation and criminalisation.

Western leaders have been at pains to negate the notion that they target Islam. This is because such a notion taking hold amongst Muslims would result in a major backlash, rejection and, in turn, failure of the policy. Getting Muslims to work with them would be out of the question. Hence, they have repeatedly said that their target is 'radical' or 'extreme' versions of Islam, not Islam itself. However, in reality a different picture is observed.

One, words such as 'radical' and 'extreme' are highly subjective and can only be applied through one ideological lens or another. For western policymakers, this lens is secular liberalism. Two, in practice the ideas these policymakers speak against and identify as problematic include many ideas that are clearly Islamic. Hence, those Islamic ideas that conflict with secular liberal ideals find themselves in amongst the ideas counter-terrorism policy, and counter-extremism policy more specifically, seeks to attack, challenge and eliminate to the extent possible.

Targeting not just violence but the ideas that purportedly lead to violence as well has been a point emphasised in counter-terrorism policy from the beginning.

In an address to the National Press Club in April 2004, then Foreign Minister Alexander Downer said,

"It is crucial that we challenge the ideas by which terrorists seek to justify their actions. Otherwise we vacate the important intellectual battleground in the war against terrorism- allowing terrorists to exploit the politics of despair. In our engagement internationally with other governments, Australia makes clear our understanding that the campaign against terror must be fought on the battleground of ideas- side by side with efforts on law and order and security."¹⁴⁶

In a speech in London entitled 'Ideas as Weapons: Meeting the Ideological Challenge of Extremism' in December 2006 he said,

"Ordinary Australians...want to know what is fanning this violent extremism. The answer is: ideas. Even though they are couched in religious terms, the ideas that drive terrorist groups like JI and al Qaeda are political in nature. Their ideas are based on a distorted and selective interpretation of Islam."¹⁴⁷

Current Prime Minister Tony Abbott, then Federal Health Minister, wrote in a December 2006 opinion piece,

"It's now glaringly obvious that the war on terror will not be won by armies and security services, important though these are. The war on terror will only be won when people no longer feel that terror is justified. That's why this debate about being Muslim and being Australian is part of Australia's potential contribution to a safer world, along with our military forces in Iraq and Afghanistan."¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁶ Downer, A. *Australia and the Threat of Global Terrorism - A Test of Resolve*, Speech to the National Press Club, Canberra, 13 Apr 2004: http://www.foreignminister.gov.au/speeches/2004/040413_global_terrorism.html

¹⁴⁷ Downer, A. *Ideas as Weapons: Meeting the Ideological Challenge of Extremism*, International Institute of Strategic Studies London, 15 Dec 2006: http://www.foreignminister.gov.au/speeches/2006/061215_iiss.html

¹⁴⁸ Abbott, T. *Debate Needed on Islam's Place*, *The Australian*, 14 Dec 2006: <http://bit.ly/19ATjWb>

Robert McClelland, then Attorney-General, said in 2011 in a ministerial statement on the 10th anniversary of the September 11 attacks,

“The Australian Government, like its counterparts in the United States and United Kingdom, understands that addressing the causes of radicalisation that lead to violent extremism is critical to tackling terrorism. Immediately after 9/11 there was much focus on international law enforcement, tough terrorism laws, and physical security measures, all of which have delivered results through the detection and deterrence of terrorist activity. What was less appreciated was that a strong counter-terrorism response needs broader strategies to lessen the appeal of extremist ideologies that fuel terrorism in the first place.”¹⁴⁹

This notion was reflected in policy.

The National Action Plan (NAP) of the late Howard and early Rudd eras included targeting ideas. The more recent CVE strategy placed further emphasis on this aspect of the policy. It seeks to counter ‘radicalisation’ which is defined as relating to the ideas that allegedly lead to violence, not the violence itself. The Government’s *Resilient Communities* website states,

“When individuals’ beliefs move from being relatively mainstream to being radical and they want a drastic change in society, this is known as radicalisation. It doesn’t necessarily mean these people will become violent. If they decide that fear, terror and violence are justified to achieve ideological, political or social change – this is when they become followers of violent extremism.”¹⁵⁰

The Australian Attorney-General’s Department has repeatedly re-iterated the government strategy of addressing the radicalisation process,

“...we are actively working with the States and Territories to develop initiatives geared towards the de-radicalisation of individuals within the correctional system. Working with respected community leaders is an important part of this project.”¹⁵¹

“Our goal is to help members of our communities to be less vulnerable to the process of radicalisation and violent extremism.”¹⁵²

“Immediately after 9/11 there was much focus on an armed response, tough terrorism laws, and physical security measures, all of which have brought results through the detection and deterrence of terrorist activity. What was less appreciated, however, was that a comprehensive counter-terrorism response needed to include broader strategies to lessen the appeal of extremist ideologies that fuel terrorism in the first place.”¹⁵³

“The Australian Government’s Countering Violent Extremism program works with these agencies and local communities to prevent radicalisation of those in Australia who are targeted by extremist messages.”¹⁵⁴

As for the fact that part of the ideas targeted are Islamic ideas, we have already seen how entirely normative Islamic concepts such as the *Khilafah* and resisting foreign occupation and interference have been tied to terrorism and the alleged terrorist narrative.

The 2004 Terrorism White Paper characterised the very legitimate Muslims aspirations of removing western neo-colonial influence from Muslim lands and establishing the Caliphate as the goals of the ‘terrorists’,

¹⁴⁹ McClelland, R. *Ministerial Statement - 10th anniversary of September 11 terrorist attacks*, House of Representatives, Parliament House, Canberra, 12 Sep 2011: <http://bit.ly/1bdfHik>

¹⁵⁰ Australian Government, Attorney-General’s Department, *What is violent extremism?*, Resilient Communities, 2013: <http://bit.ly/1aMKVny>

¹⁵¹ McClelland, R. *Community Resilience and National Security: An Agenda for the Future*, Australian National University National Security College Canberra, 13 July 2010: <http://bit.ly/1cxuLVO>

¹⁵² McClelland, R. *Address to National Security College Senior Executive Development Course Dinner*, Old Parliament House, 10 Mar 2011: <http://bit.ly/1ax3Whh>

¹⁵³ McClelland, R. *The 9/11 Decade*, United States Studies Centre, 7 Jun 2011: <http://bit.ly/1c2hGRO>

¹⁵⁴ McClelland, R. *Ministerial Statement - 10th anniversary of September 11 terrorist attacks*, House of Reps. Canberra, 12 Sep 2011: <http://bit.ly/1bdfHik>

“Although they act in the name of a religious cause, these terrorists have political goals. They want ultimately to establish a caliphate—a pan-Muslim super-state that unites all Muslims and all lands now or ever part of the Islamic world. This includes the Middle East and North Africa from the Red Sea to the Atlantic coast. It includes Andalusia in Spain, parts of the Balkans, Central and South Asia through to the Indonesian archipelago, and parts of the Philippines in South-East Asia.

They seek to drive the West’s presence and influence from these lands. They oppose governments in Muslim countries—criticising them for being ‘un-Islamic’ and therefore illegitimate—and seek to replace them with ones that accord with their extremist views.”¹⁵⁵

Alexander Downer, then Foreign Minister, in a Speech to the Centre for Muslim States and Societies at the University of Western Australia in November 2005, said,

“Let’s be crystal clear about what the terrorists are seeking. Let’s strip away the rhetoric and focus on the type of world they want to create. Their goal is to create a new extremist Caliphate in the Muslim world - a Taliban style theocracy. In South-East Asia they want to drive out western influence and establish a fundamentalist regime across Indonesia, Malaysia, Southern Thailand and Southern Philippines. The same for the Middle-East - a Caliphate stretching from the Caucuses to North Africa. They want to get rid of democracy in these countries and replace it with a puritanical regime that denies individual freedoms.”¹⁵⁶

In an address to the Sydney Institute in November 2006, he said,

“So what is Extremist Islamism...these are some of the things we commonly hear that make up the terrorist narrative:

- Islam is under attack from the West. The Islamic world is divided, and Muslim countries are either occupied by or under the sway of the morally corrupt West. The reason for this is that Muslims have strayed from the “correct” religious path and most Muslim countries are run by leaders who are servile to the West and have renounced Islam.
- Democracy is a false religion because only God can exercise sovereignty over worldly communities. The personal liberties and materialism that characterise the Western way of life, including the freedoms enjoyed by women, constitute a mortal threat to Islamic society.
- The West is responsible for the eviction of the Palestinians from their land and has occupied Iraq militarily in order to enslave its people and plunder its oil wealth.

The terrorists argue that the only way to unify the “Islamic nation” is by eliminating all Western influence in Muslim countries and overthrowing the current regimes.

“In place of the old regimes, the terrorists want to found a new order - Islamic states based on extreme interpretations of religious Sharia Law. Some dream of recreating the Islamic Caliphate that existed in the seventh century and extending this into our region.”¹⁵⁷

The suggestion that the call for the re-establishment of the *Khilafah* and the political work exposing the reality of western foreign policy is responsible for the radicalisation of Muslim youth is nothing but a cheap attempt to deceitfully connect Islamic political work with terrorism and extremism.

Current policy follows the same approach.

¹⁵⁵ Australian Government, Terrorism White Paper 2004, *Transnational Terrorism: The Threat to Australia*, Department of Foreign Affairs, 15 Jul 2004, p. 9: http://www.dfat.gov.au/publications/terrorism/transnational_terrorism.pdf

¹⁵⁶ Downer, A. *Interfaith Dialogue, the Australian Approach*, Speech to the Centre for Muslim States and Societies, UWA, 21 Nov 2005: http://www.foreignminister.gov.au/speeches/2005/051121_centre_for_muslim_states.html

¹⁵⁷ Downer, A. *Terrorism: Winning the Battle of Ideas*, *The Sydney Institute*, 1 Nov 2006: <http://bit.ly/1ddL47g>

The current Counter-Terrorism White Paper (2010) mentions the ‘extreme’ ideas the Government has in its sights. The paper refers to these ideas, three out of the four of which have no relation to violence and are perfectly legitimate Islamic ideas, as a ‘distorted narrative’. Anyone who believes in replacing the western-backed dictators in the Muslim world with true Islamic rule is judged as being an extremist and radical who subscribes to terrorist beliefs.

A distorted narrative

- Many distinct terrorist networks with differing and often local objectives share a broadly common set of beliefs that narrowly and simplistically interprets history and current affairs through the lens of the alleged oppression of Muslims, principally by the West. Groups like al-Qa’ida want people to believe:
- the West, led by the United States of America, is engaged in the systematic exploitation and repression of Muslims;
- governments in Muslim majority countries are illegitimate, corrupt and un-Islamic;
- the solution is the removal of Western interference in Muslim majority countries and the establishment of ‘truly Islamic’ systems of governance; and
- it is the religious duty of all Muslims individually to use violence to attack the political, military, religious and cultural enemies of Islam anywhere around the world.”¹⁵⁸

This type of characterisation is instructive. It sensationalises very legitimate Muslim aspirations and ideas and ties them with the use of violence in order to problematise them. If we consider each point separately only the last point could be called extreme and considered a problem because it involves the use of violence ‘anywhere’ around the world. As for the other three, every Muslim believes in point three, whilst most believe in the first two. Only a very small minority would subscribe to the fourth in the generality of its expression.

Yet if we do not consider them separately, but as a whole, as presented here, then each point turns out as extreme by mere association. As does the position holding the first three and advocating a non-violent response instead of point four. Thus we see non-violent Islamic groups, such as Hizb ut-Tahrir, labeled as ‘extreme’, a fact indicating quite clearly that certain ideas are targeted for themselves, not because of their association with violence.

This is an intentional ploy to sully legitimate Muslim views and aspirations along with problematic ones.

Tony Blair did the same thing, mentioning a very similar list in his famous post-7/7 speech of what he said were the “barbaric ideas” of the “evil ideology” of the terrorists: that they demand the elimination of Israel, the withdrawal of westerners from Muslim countries; the establishment of Sharia law in the Muslim world “en route to one caliphate of all Muslim nations.”¹⁵⁹

Alexander Downer, then Foreign Minister, also did the same in 2005 speaking at the International Conference for Peace and Harmony in front of Muslim community representatives. He outlined the “evil objectives” of the “Islamic- extremist terrorists,” in the following words,

“To understand this properly we need to understand the evil objectives of Islamic-extremist terrorists. What the terrorists want, their ultimate goal if you like, is to create a new Caliphate in the Muslim world. They want to drive out Western interests and influence from Muslim countries and they want to destroy

¹⁵⁸ Australian Government, *Counter-Terrorism White Paper: Securing Australia – Protecting our Community*, Department of the Prime Minister and cabinet, 23 Feb 2010, p. 8: <http://bit.ly/GMkreB>

¹⁵⁹ Blair, T. *PM Tony Blair’s speech on the London bombings*, Labour Party National Conference, 16 Jul 2005: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/4689363.stm

moderate Muslim governments. And they want to establish in their place an extremist Islamic regime that would be brutal, tyrannical and intolerant. Such a regime would plunge these countries into a pre-modern world, where women and minorities would have no rights, where technology would be shunned and where personal choice and economic freedom would not be tolerated.”¹⁶⁰

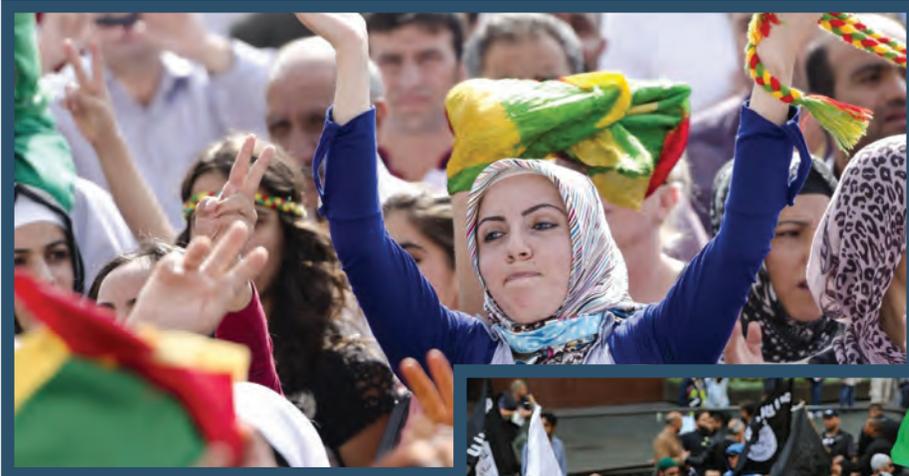
ASIO’s most recent annual report to Parliament, tabled in late October 2013, is another example of this type of approach. It makes a “particular note” of that ASIO “investigated several hundred mostly Australia-based individuals who are advocates of a violent Islamist ideology.”¹⁶¹ These “several hundred” are those who were investigated, implying that there even more out there.

Anyone who has any length of interaction in the Muslim community knows how wrong this is. It is nonsense to suggest that there are hundreds of Muslims in the community who advocate violence on Australian soil or against civilians. What has been done here is to include those holding ideas deemed problematic as “advocates of violent Islamist ideology.”

Thus we see that government policy is to promote non-Islamic ideas as Islamic whilst characterising key Islamic ideas as being not only extreme but an aberration of Islam, all under the guise of counter-extremism and counter-terrorism.

¹⁶⁰ Downer, A. Opening of the *Multifaith Conference for Peace and Harmony*, Sydney, 30 Sep 2005: <http://bit.ly/16DWaO1>

¹⁶¹ Australian Government, Australian Security and Intelligence Organisation, ASIO Report to Parliament 2012-2013, p. 12: <http://www.asio.gov.au/img/files/ASIO-Report-to-Parliament-2012-13.pdf>



SECTION VII

POLARISING THE COMMUNITY: 'MODERATES' VS. 'EXTREMISTS'

Part of the Australian Government's efforts to promote a state-sanctioned version of Islam – one that facilitates integration at home and the maintenance of exploitative foreign policies abroad – is to divide and polarise the Muslim community into 'moderates' and 'extremists' or 'radicals'.

The 'extremists' are depicted as irrational, backward and intolerant, prone to violence and a security threat. The 'moderates', on the other hand, are depicted as a people who happen to be Muslim but are like other 'normal' Australians. They identify as Australians and contribute to the successful building of a harmonious multicultural society. They are willing to partake in the Australian way of life and more importantly they share beliefs and values that unite the nation. The 'moderates' follow a moderate, Australian Islam, whilst the 'extremists' follow a distorted radical version of Islam. Thus the government narrative would have us believe.

Importantly, government counter-extremism policy does not stop at merely dividing the community, promoting one version of Islam and demonising another. It also comprises using those deemed moderate against those deemed extreme. This approach has the government aim for two birds with the one stone. It seeks to use Muslims to implement its counter-terrorism agenda and, in the process, to pit Muslims against each other.

The United Kingdom & United States

This was, of course, the same strategy adopted in the UK and the US.

"We must pull this up by its roots. Within Britain, we must join up with our Muslims community to take on the extremists. Worldwide, we should confront it everywhere it exists. Next week I and other party leaders will meet key members of the Muslim community. Out of it I hope we can get agreed action to take this common fight forward. I want also to work with other nations to promote the true face of Islam worldwide. Round the world, there are conferences already being held, numerous inter-faith dialogues in place but we need to bring all of these activities together and give them focus."¹⁶² Tony Blair, UK Prime Minister, August 2005

"Second, we need to take steps to isolate extremist organisations and those individuals who promote extremism. In so doing, it is essential for us to work closely with the mainstream faith communities and to understand their preoccupations."¹⁶³ - Charles Clarke, UK Home Secretary, October 2005.

"...and then since only by Muslims can this be done: standing up for and supporting those within Islam who will tell them all of this but more, namely that the extremist view of Islam is not just theologically backward but completely contrary to the spirit and teaching of the Koran."¹⁶⁴ – Tony Blair, UK Prime Minister, March 2006

"Britain is one of the safest, most tolerant countries on earth to be a Muslim. There is no clash of civilisations; no 'Jewish conspiracy'. Israel has the right to exist within secure borders, alongside a state for the Palestinian people. There is no justification, under any circumstances, for suicide bombing and the slaughter of innocents. These are the facts. We need a sustained challenge to the Al-Qaida narrative, taken up by moderate Muslims and others, in a variety of forms." – Hazel Blears, Secretary of State for Communities UK, July 2008.¹⁶⁵

That is, 'moderate' Muslims are to carry not only a secular form of Islam, but a government sponsored message on a variety of political issues!

¹⁶² Blair, T. *Blair speech on terror*, Labour Party National Conference, 16 Jul 2005: <http://bbc.in/qMFEPa>

¹⁶³ Clarke, C. *Contesting the Threat of Terrorism*, The Heritage Foundation, 21 Oct 2005: <http://herit.ag/nBTOzo>

¹⁶⁴ Blair, T. *Not A Clash Between Civilisations, But A Clash About Civilisation*, The Foreign Policy Centre, 21 Mar 2006: <http://bit.ly/1dPGJre>

¹⁶⁵ Blears, H. *Speech to Policy Exchange*: 17 Jul 2008.

Indeed, the British Government has long had detailed strategies, to the extent of mentioning specific ‘moderate’ groups and people they use against ‘violent extremists’.

“Violent extremists distort Islam in an attempt to justify their actions. We will facilitate debate and amplify mainstream voices against them. Government can help credible individuals to speak out. It can promote discussion and recognise and support people and organisations who speak authoritatively about Islam. Muslim faith institutions are central to this, and as Government we know we must strike the right balance between support and intervention, to respect the boundaries between faith institutions and the state.

We are clear that it is not the role of Government to seek to change any religion. However, where theology is being distorted to justify violent extremist rhetoric or activity and threaten both Muslims and non-Muslims, Government should reinforce faith understanding and thereby build resilience. We will facilitate debate to expose the paucity of the extremist message. We are clear, however, that these initiatives must be community-based and community-led.

Some of the key activities to support mainstream voices include:

- Supporting the Radical Middle Way project and similar initiatives to bring together authoritative voices to speak to communities in the UK and around the world.
- Supporting the establishment of a board of leading Muslim scholars to help articulate an understanding of Islam in Britain.
- Creating national and regional young persons’ forums to provoke debate and contribute to policy development.
- Promoting through our higher education network the UK as a standard setter for Islamic studies outside the Islamic world.
- Supporting the development and dissemination of materials to increase uptake of citizenship education in mosque schools.

To be successful we need to ensure that:

- The voices of violent extremists do not go unchallenged.
- People are able to access a wider range of alternative, authoritative views about Islam and participate in debate.
- Communities have an increased range of tools and support to help them in rejecting violent extremism.
- Mainstream voices overseas are amplified to resonate with counterparts in the UK.”¹⁶⁶

The US adopted the same strategy as well.

“Protecting American communities from al Qaeda’s hateful ideology is not the work of government alone. Communities- especially Muslim American communities whose children, families, and neighbors are being targeted for recruitment by al Qaeda- are often best positioned to take the lead because they know their communities best.”¹⁶⁷ - President Barack Obama, August 2011.

In fact, in the US the work on this front in the Muslim World by the Bush Administration was of immense proportions. David Kaplan revealed the findings of an investigative report by *U.S. News & World Report* in April 2005:

“The White House has approved a classified new strategy, dubbed Muslim World Outreach, that for the first time states that the United States has a national security interest in influencing what happens within

¹⁶⁶ HM Government, *Preventing Violent Extremism: A Strategy for Delivery*, May 2008: <http://bit.ly/1f7UZff>

¹⁶⁷ Obama, B. *Empowering Local Partners To Prevent Violent Extremism In The United States*, The White House Washington, Aug 2011: http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/empowering_local_partners.pdf

Islam. Because America is, as one official put it, "radioactive" in the Islamic world, the plan calls for working through third parties--moderate Muslim nations, foundations, and reform groups--to promote shared values of democracy, women's rights, and tolerance.

In at least two dozen countries, Washington has quietly funded Islamic radio and TV shows, coursework in Muslim schools, Muslim think tanks, political workshops, or other programs that promote moderate Islam. Federal aid is going to restore mosques, save ancient Korans, even build Islamic schools.

"Aimed at strengthening the hand of moderates, the plan acknowledges that America has done poorly in reaching out to them. But it goes one big step further, stating that the United States and its allies have a national security interest not only in what happens in the Islamic world but within Islam itself...It further states that because America is limited to what it can do in a religious struggle, the nation must rely on partners who share values like democracy, women's rights, and tolerance. Among those partners: allied Muslim states, private foundations, and nonprofit groups."¹⁶⁸

Australia

In Australia, the idea of conscripting Muslims to be on the front lines of the battle against 'Islamic extremism' was first presented by the Howard government.

John Howard held a summit in Canberra with thirteen 'moderate' Muslim leaders, hand-picked by the Government, in August 2005 in order to ask them to help "neutralise" 'radical' Muslims. Speaking before the summit about its purpose, John Howard explained what he wanted from Muslim leaders,

"Well, I'll be putting to them the need for them to assume positions of leadership and responsibility within their own community. I'll be reminding them, as I remind all Australians, that our common values as Australians transcend any other allegiances or commitments that we have, and I'll be talking in practical ways about how those goals might be advanced."¹⁶⁹

The summit itself highlighted 'Islamic extremism' as the problem, flagged intervention in Islamic schools and mosques as a means to deal with it, discussed plans to regulate the training and appointment of imams and teach them about Australian values and the Australian way of life, and resulted in unanimous approval of an 11-point statement. The Muslim leaders in attendance were encouraged to publicly denounce 'radicals' and to help ASIO and the AFP with information about them.¹⁷⁰

In explaining why 'radicals' were excluded from the government invitation to attend the summit of John Howard explained,

"My purpose is to marginalise extremism, that is the best way...and the purpose of this gathering is to identify ways to further enforce and entrench the moderate mainstream view. We want to promote the ideal of moderation and identification with the values that all Australians share. The people who can best reach the people who might be influenced by extreme views are in fact people of moderate disposition within the Muslim community, and they're the very people that I want to talk to."¹⁷¹

In 2005 Foreign Affairs Minister Alexander Downer speaking at the International Conference for Peace and Harmony in front of Muslim Community representatives said,

"But the most significant point I want to make to everyone and, in particular to Muslims, both Australian Muslims and those from around the region and the world, is that the war against terrorism is not a war against Muslims. On the contrary, it is a battle we all share in, because Muslims are as much the targets as

¹⁶⁸ Kaplan, D. Hearts, Minds, and Dollars: *In an Unseen Front in the War on Terrorism, America is Spending Millions...To Change the Very Face of Islam*, U.S. News & World Report, 17 Apr 2005: http://www.usnews.com/usnews/news/articles/050425/25roots_2.htm

¹⁶⁹ Hassan, T. *PM to meet with Muslim leaders tomorrow*, ABC, The World Today, 22 Aug 05: <http://www.abc.net.au/worldtoday/content/2005/s1443237.htm>

¹⁷⁰ Jennett, G. *Muslim leaders agree to neutralise radicals*, ABC, Lateline, 23 Aug 2005: <http://www.abc.net.au/lateline/content/2005/s1444591.htm>

¹⁷¹ Australian Associated Press. *PM on summit snub: extremists must be marginalised*, The Sydney Morning Herald, 19 Aug 2005: <http://bit.ly/1dzJGOZ>

the so-called Westerners.

“So let us all be clear. We are in this together. This is not a battle between Muslims and non-Muslims. This is a battle between tolerance and intolerance.

“The most successful warriors against the Islamic extremist terrorists will be moderate Muslims. In the Mosques, in the Islamic schools and more broadly in the Muslim community, it is moderate Muslims who can spread and give life to the great values of peace and tolerance which are at the heart of the beliefs of the overwhelming majority of Muslims. We must support each other, as people who respect the rights of others, as people who value tolerance. We must support moderate Muslims to ensure that they successfully defeat the divisive message of hate, tyranny and intolerance propagated by the extremists.” Minister of Foreign Affairs, Alexander Downer, September 2005.¹⁷²

In November 2005, in a Speech to the Centre for Muslim States and Societies at the University of Western Australia in November 2005, he said,

“The key to winning the battle of ideas, to exposing the terrorists’ bankrupt ideology, will be the efforts of mainstream Muslims. INTRA-faith dialogue is central to this battle of ideas...Mainstream Muslims are much more likely to have an effect on extremists, and potential extremists than people of other faiths. And mainstream Muslims, I think, have a responsibility to challenge extremist interpretations of Islam. Denying the problem is not an option.”¹⁷³

Phillip Ruddock, then Attorney-General, said in August 2005,

“The organisation [Hizb ut-Tahrir], from what I have seen publicly, is an organisation that suggests it has some over, overriding allegiance to a Pan-Islamic cause and they are, they are matters in the context of our commitment to Australia first and foremost that would give any Australian concern... the Prime Minister has flagged that engagement with the Islamic community broadly, that we want to marginalise those people who don’t have any commitment to this nation, and believe they have some other overriding, overriding commitment in relation to the allegiance that they give.”¹⁷⁴

The Labour Government continued with the same policy.

“The Australian Government is working with communities to build resilience to extremist influences, challenge extremist messages and support constructive participation in Australia’s democratic processes and in the wider community.”¹⁷⁵

“Community leaders and groups, together with government, are helping to promote and protect strong, resilient communities that resist and reject violent extremism. Communities are already identifying and supporting vulnerable individuals, undertaking youth support initiatives, implementing activities to build community cohesion and encouraging positive and constructive civic participation.”¹⁷⁶

“To achieve our vision, we are working with our partners to:

1. Identify and divert violent extremists and, where possible, support them in disengaging from violent extremism
2. Identify and support at-risk groups and individuals to resist and reject violent extremist ideologies
3. Build community cohesion and resilience to violent extremism
4. Communicate effectively to challenge extremist messages and support alternative narratives.”¹⁷⁷

¹⁷² Downer, A. Opening of the Multifaith Conference for Peace and Harmony, Sydney, 30 Sep 2005: <http://bit.ly/16DWaO1>

¹⁷³ Downer, A. Interfaith Dialogue, the Australian Approach, Speech to the Centre for Muslim States and Societies, UWA, 21 Nov 2005: http://www.foreignminister.gov.au/speeches/2005/051121_centre_for_muslim_states.html

¹⁷⁴ Ruddock, P. *Hizb ut-Tahrir; religious extremism*, Channel Nine’s Today Show, 8 Aug 2005: <http://bit.ly/1dzKvHF>

¹⁷⁵ Australian Government, Attorney-General’s Department *What We Are Doing*, Resilient Communities: <http://bit.ly/1c9mx2f>

¹⁷⁶ Australian Government, Attorney-General’s Department, *Current Activities*, Resilient Communities: <http://bit.ly/1c908IG>

¹⁷⁷ Australian Government, Attorney-General’s Department, *Countering Violent Extremism Strategy*, Resilient Communities: <http://bit.ly/1apZVJA>

"We also need to focus on targeted initiatives to identify those exposed to, or at risk of being influenced by violent extremists. Only then will we be able to support them in exploring alternative pathways. Experience from around the world indicates that enlisting and engaging families, communities and moderate religious leaders is crucial. And, as noted by the Quilliam Foundation in the United Kingdom, many of these projects can and should occur independently of Government. In many instances community members are often more readily able to recognise extremist behaviour and may indeed be more effective in combating those views before they take hold."¹⁷⁸ – Attorney-General Robert McClelland, July 2009

"...it is important for the community to have a role in this. It is preferable that any argument countering that of hate and violence be advanced by the community itself, rather than by just the Government. Community mentoring is also a very important aspect of the strategy. Last week I met with a number of community representatives in Sydney to discuss how we can better work at the local level to achieve these objectives."¹⁷⁹ – Attorney-General Robert McClelland, July 2010

It is important to note here that those deemed 'extreme' by the Government are not just those who use violence. Even those who do not use violence but hold views, perfectly legitimate views as far as Islam is concerned, which the Government deems extreme are also targeted as part of counter-extremism efforts. Groups such as Hizb ut-Tahrir, ASWJ, individuals such as Sh. Taj al-Din al-Helaly and others have routinely been labeled extreme and targeted.

¹⁷⁸ McClelland, R. *Speech To The Australian Strategic Policy Institute*, Canberra, 21 Jul 2009: <http://bit.ly/17kiu5e>

¹⁷⁹ McClelland, R. *Community Resilience and National Security: An Agenda for the Future*, Australian National University National Security College Canberra, 13 Jul 2010: <http://bit.ly/1cxuLV0>



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SECTION VIII

TARGETING IMAMS AND THE QUEST FOR A COMPLIANT LEADERSHIP

It has been a long-term government objective to create a Muslim community leadership compliant with government policies and directives. Through this, the government seeks to legitimise its policies with respect to Islam and Muslims in the eyes of the community via the involvement of, consultation with, and ultimately affirmation from, the 'leadership'. In this respect, both religious leaders (shaykhs and imams) and other community leaders are targeted.

Two broad approaches have been employed in the attempt to create a compliant community leadership: recruitment and training of existing leaders and nurturing and training of new leaders.

Targeting Imams

Given the important role of scholars and Imams within the Muslim community as leaders and guides, they have been, and continue to be, a key target of the Government's counter-terrorism agenda. Winning Imams to their side is imperative for government to succeed in gaining legitimacy within the community for its 'moderate' Islam, which, in turn, is imperative for its desired outcomes of Muslim integration and maintenance of the counter-terrorism agenda.

The Imams have been subject to a barrage of criticism and have been issued expectations from the Government. They have been told that because terrorism is committed in the name of Islam, it is their problem. They have been told that they need to deliver their sermons in English and pay less attention to the language of the Quran because it is a radicalising factor. Their responsibilities as Imams have been defined for them by politicians. They are asked, time and again, to come out publicly, shoulder to shoulder with the authorities, to condemn those Muslims who perpetrate violence.

They have been told to teach and deliver to their congregations 'Islam in the Australian context'. They have been told to lead the challenge against the 'extremists' and their 'radical' ideology which threatens Australia's 'social cohesion'. They have been told in unequivocal terms that they live in a secular country and that they will be trained in the values of this nation. And they have been told that if they do not do more of the above, then the Muslim community will feel the repercussions of a social backlash.

Various policy articulations highlight the targeting of Imams as a means to influence the Muslim community.

"The NAP proposes that...leaders of communities at risk of having members susceptible to radicalisation be actively involved in responding to issues within their community that potentially threaten Australia's social cohesion and national security."¹⁸⁰

"I think when Islam is being put under pressure, is being used by terrorists to justify evil acts; it's very important that spiritual leaders have a capacity to explain to Muslims in Australia, the significance of Islam in an Australian context.

"But the fact is there needs to be the conversation with the Imams and with the broader leaders in that community about the importance of the next generation of Imams, and the importance of all Imams having English skills, and we talked again on Saturday, about how aspiring Imams can be trained, in an Australian context." – Andrew Robb, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Immigration and Multicultural Affairs, September 2006.¹⁸¹

"Now I understand that's a challenge (finding the synergies between Islam and Australian values and lifestyle) for many of the older Muslim generation, but it's one that's got to be met. It means recognising,

¹⁸⁰ Australian Government, Dept. of Immigration, *A National Action Plan to Build on Social Cohesion, Harmony and Security*, 2005: <http://bit.ly/1gy8oz7>

¹⁸¹ Crittenden, S. *Andrew Robb MP*, ABC's The Religion Report, 20 Sep 2006: <http://ab.co/1deczh0>

for example, that many young Australian Muslims only speak English. So, religious leaders will have to deliver much or all of their sermons in English. This means training home grown Imams in Australia.” - Andrew Robb, April 2006.¹⁸²

“There is a problem, there is a concern, and it’s shared in the Islamic community, that there is not a sufficient Australian perspective felt and conveyed by some of the Imams. - John Howard, Prime Minister, August 2005.¹⁸³

“We’re not in the business of renegotiating the values of this country to accommodate any minority, be it Islamic or otherwise. And leaders of the Islamic community have a very strong responsibility, especially at this time to show leadership and the rest of the Australian community will expect that to occur. I’ll be putting to them the need for them to assume positions of leadership and responsibility within their own community. I’ll be reminding them, as I remind all Australians, our common values as Australians transcend any other allegiance or commitments that we have.” - John Howard, Prime Minister, August 2005.¹⁸⁴

On 16th September 2006, Andrew Robb, then Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Immigration and Multicultural Affairs, summoned over 100 Imams to attend a two day Conference of Australian Imams. The opening address by Andrew Robb at the conference and associated commentary in media interviews is quite telling of the unprecedented government interference in a religious community in Australia. Headlines such as the ‘Muslims read riot act’¹⁸⁵ told of a humiliating dressing down of the community’s Imams.

The following are some telling excerpts from Andrew Robb’s address to the Imams at the conference.

“It’s no coincidence that similar meetings of Imams have occurred in other countries, such as the Muslims of Europe Conference in July, the Austrian Imam Conference in April 2005 and the European Imam Conference in June 2003.

“I want to start with some brief words about the relationship between religion and a secular state, because one third of the world’s one billion Muslims live as minority members of secular countries, such as Australia.

As I see it, the relationship anyone, of any faith, has with their god is a one-to-one relationship. It is a personal commitment. Yet, at the same time, we all must live in a world where we are part of a community, where we must have effective relationships with the other people who make up that community. It is a community commitment.

These two commitments are important. To achieve a cohesive society one commitment can’t dictate to the other. In this regard, one of the most fundamental aspects of our democracy in Australia is the separation of church and state.

“These are challenging times for Muslims. And, because it is your faith that is being invoked as justification for these evil acts, it is your problem.

“Instead, speak up and condemn terrorism, defend your role in the way of life that we all share here in Australia. Some of your leaders do this, but too many are silent, or simply protest that they are being branded unfairly.

“I appreciate that as Imams you are not necessarily the political voice of Australian Muslims, but you are the spiritual leaders in your communities, and you have very important responsibilities in helping many Australian Muslims function as a normal and confident part of the Australian community, especially in these very difficult times.

“...you are the spiritual leaders in your communities, and you have very important responsibilities...

¹⁸² Robb, A. *Australian Migrant Integration — Past Successes, Future Challenges*, The Sydney Institute, 27 Apr 2006: <http://bit.ly/GK10nQ>

¹⁸³ Howard, J. *Joint Press Conference with Dr Ameer Ali President, Australian Federation of Islamic Councils Parliament House, Canberra*, 23 Aug 2005: <http://pmtranscripts.dpmc.gov.au/browse.php?did=21878>

¹⁸⁴ ABC News. *Muslim group unveils plan to tackle radicals*, Australian Broadcasting Corporation, 22 Aug 2005: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2005-08-22/muslim-group-unveils-plan-to-tackle-radicals/2085900>

¹⁸⁵ Wright, L. *Muslims read riot act*, news.com.au, 17 Sep 2006: <http://bit.ly/1gSxTxM>

For Imams to present Islam in a truly Australian context, especially to second and third generation young Australian Muslims, it would seem essential that Imams be able to preach effectively in English...

The fact that I have needed to have my comments translated into several different languages so that many of you could understand my address here this morning, very clearly highlights my concern.

As Imams and spiritual leaders I believe you also have a very special responsibility to correct the terrorists' false use of the Koran to justify their evil acts...

Preaching in your Mosque a strong denunciation and correction of these extremist misrepresentations of the Koran would appear to be one of your fundamental responsibilities.

"As well, it [NCEIS] will be an opportunity for aspiring Australian Imams to have important parts of their education undertaken in an Australian context, including the study of other religions.

"Of course, such an Institute cannot be a seminary. The more theological components of an Imam's training will need to be organised by the Muslim communities themselves, and one of the important things you can do this weekend is discuss how this might be achieved in Australia. 'Home grown' Imams, educated in Australia, are very important."

Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Immigration and Multicultural Affairs, Andrew Robb, Address to the Conference of Australian Imams, 16 September 2006.¹⁸⁶

Andrew Robb also spoke many times about creating a new brand of 'home grown' Imams who have gone through state-sanctioned Islamic education and training.

"We want it [NCEIS] to be a world-class centre for Islamic studies so that we can encourage Australian Muslims who have got aspirations to being religious, to become home-grown Imams, to learn their religious practice within the context of an Australian university course." Andrew Robb, January 2007.¹⁸⁷

"So, religious leaders will have to deliver much or all of their sermons in English. This means training home grown Imams in Australia. Local training of Imams would be greatly assisted by the creation of a world class Institute of Islamic Studies." Andrew Robb, April 2006.¹⁸⁸

The targeting of Imams was also a continued policy of the Labor Government.

"We also need to focus on targeted initiatives to identify those exposed to, or at risk of being influenced by violent extremists. Only then will we be able to support them in exploring alternative pathways. Experience from around the world indicates that enlisting and engaging families, communities and moderate religious leaders is crucial." – Robert McClelland, Attorney-General, July 2009.¹⁸⁹

"Community leaders and groups, together with government, are helping to promote and protect strong, resilient communities that resist and reject violent extremism.

"The Australian Government is committed to working closely with communities to build lasting partnerships to address violent extremism. Engagement activities already under way range from informal meetings between the government and community leaders through to more formal activities. At community engagement forums, community members meet with government officials to raise issues of concern on behalf of their community, provide feedback on government policy around countering violent extremism and talk about their contribution to developing grassroots solutions."- Resilient Communities website.¹⁹⁰

"Last week I met with a number of community representatives in Sydney.....Indeed, the view was expressed that the communities that would suffer most from a breakdown in our culture of tolerance and

¹⁸⁶ Robb, A. *Address to the Conference of Australian Imams*, Sydney, 16 Sep 2006: <http://bit.ly/1agKJwR>

¹⁸⁷ ABC News. *Islamic studies centre will create 'home-grown imams', Govt says*, Australian Broadcasting Corporation, 23 Jan 2007: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2007-01-23/islamic-studies-centre-will-create-home-grown/2177668>

¹⁸⁸ Robb, A. *Australian Migrant Integration - Past Successes, Future Challenges*, Sydney Institute, 27 Apr 2006: <http://bit.ly/GK10nQ>

¹⁸⁹ McClelland, R. *Speech To The Australian Strategic Policy Institute*, Canberra, 21 Jul 2009: <http://bit.ly/17kiu5e>

¹⁹⁰ Australian Government, Attorney-General's Department, *Current Activities*, Resilient Communities: <http://bit.ly/1c908IG>

respect would be the communities from which the perpetrators of any terrorist attack originated.” Robert McClelland, Australian Attorney-General, ANU National Security College, July 2010.¹⁹¹

“Empowering Youth to Say No to Radicalisation Program-Islamic Council of Queensland

The project will aim to develop counter narrative messages to challenge Islamic militancy propaganda through the use of guest speakers and workshops involving academics, Queensland Police and Imams. With established networks within congregations, these entities will encourage youth who have a fear and mistrust of authority to participate positively in the Australian way of life encompassing the values of freedom, fair play, mateship and tolerance.” - Resilient Communities website.¹⁹²

“Attorney-General Mark Dreyfus QC today visited the Lakemba Mosque to acknowledge the vital role of community leadership in building resilience to violent extremism. During his meetings with community leaders, including representatives from the Lebanese Muslim Association, Mr Dreyfus also announced another round of grants in the Building Community Resilience program aimed at countering violent extremism.

“The support and suggestions we receive from community leaders are very helpful. Community leaders not only provide advice and guidance to members of their community, but through engaging with the Australian Government they assist in the development of programs appropriate for their communities.” - Attorney-General Mark Dreyfus, April 2013.¹⁹³

This is as far as policy articulations go. In practice too the targeting of Imams has been purposeful.

Muslim Reference Group

The Howard Government’s *Muslim Community Reference Group* (MCRG)¹⁹⁴ included some Imams, though only as a minority. The group did not last longer than the one year of its reference period, however, due to persistent controversy about how representative it was and how much legitimate authority and standing it had in the Muslim community. Virtually around the same time as its disbanding – late 2006 – saw the establishment of the Australian National Imams Council, signaling a shift in government policy to focus on Imams.

“The Prime Ministers ‘Muslim Community Reference Group’ (MCRG) involved handpicked representatives and was explicitly formulated to ensure ‘harmony’ however would be disbanded at the conclusion of its one year term of reference after extensive infighting and amidst numerous allegations of being highly unrepresentative and never having met the Prime Minister. The Australian National Council of Imams was established in mid-September 2006 and signalled a shift towards the promotion of spiritual, rather than political leadership.”¹⁹⁵

The idea of a Muslim reference group was resurrected by the Rudd government in 2008, although it did not take off at the time in the form described by Laurie Ferguson, then Parliamentary Secretary for Multicultural Affairs in a candid interview with the ABC’s Religion Report in March 2008.¹⁹⁶ It did however indicate that the government was working on re-establishing such a group. Laurie Ferguson noted,

“The previous government had a reference group; it undertook a number of projects, imams’ conference, youth summit etc., came up with quite a bit of work. It then went into hibernation, and we’re looking at whether and how we’d re-establish it...where it’s at is looking at a variety of options a) whether we’ll establish it; b) whether it will be its own distinct body; c) whether it will be an offshoot or a section of a multicultural committee. So there’s a number of options we’re looking at.”

¹⁹¹ McClelland, R. *Community Resilience and National Security: An Agenda for the Future*, ANU National Security College, 13 Jul 2010: <http://bit.ly/1cxuLV0>

¹⁹² Australian Government, Attorney-General’s Department, *Queensland, Resilient Communities*: <http://bit.ly/1ahHXww>

¹⁹³ Dreyfus, M. *Attorney-General commends community leadership during visit to Lakemba*, Sydney, 29 Apr 2013: <http://bit.ly/17RP5tL>

¹⁹⁴ The MCRG is discussed in more detail in the proceeding section on targeting other leaders.

¹⁹⁵ Roose, J. *The Future of Islam and Australian Multiculturalism*, Australian Political Studies Association Conference Proceedings Online, The University of Melbourne, September 2010, p. 3: http://apsa2010.com.au/full-papers/pdf/APSA2010_0200.pdf

¹⁹⁶ Crittenden, S. *A new Muslim Community Reference Group?*, ABC’s The Religion Report, 26 Mar 2008: <http://ab.co/1aMLWMA>

He described the intended composition of the group,

“I guess the one thing I’ve been driving is to hope that we can enlist younger Australian-educated, more secularist Muslims as having a voice in this process as well.”

He further argued the positives and what establishing a reference group would bring for the government,

“Well we’ve got a belief that there was need for it. Indisputably, some of the directions it took, such as *trying to accomplish Australian education of Imams*, trying to *set up a national structure of Imams*, giving prominence to youth, getting their issues out there, getting an exploration of what they think is worthwhile.” [Italics emphasis ours]

He also highlighted some of the negatives of the first reference group that the government would learn from,

“What it wasn’t good at was avoiding internal recriminations, leaking to the media every five minutes against each other, and being perceived as perhaps not being representative.”

He then re-iterated the Government’s “anti-radicalisation kind of agendas” that the group would serve,

“Indisputably, Islam is under the spotlight internationally because of a perceived connection with international terrorism. That is one reason why you’d have it as a sounding board, why you would elicit their views, why you would toss things around with them; get them to do work in regards to a variety of issues.”

Australian National Imams Council

The Australian National Imams Council (ANIC) seems to have satisfied the Government’s desire to establish what Laurie Ferguson referred to as a ‘*national structure of Imams*’.

Early in ANIC’s establishment there was considerable media coverage about the council. The then spokesperson for the council and current Director of the Queensland node of the government-established National Centre of Excellence for Islamic Studies, Dr Mohamad Abdalla stated the kind of principles the council would commit itself to and the role it would play,

“...and one of the dilemmas that the Imams have had in the past was having perhaps representatives, be they spokesperson or otherwise, who are not able to articulate the, I guess, the needs and the requirements of Islam and the Muslims within a socioeconomic political Australian context.”

“I think that is the underlying point. In the past I think we have failed to look at the idea of contextualisation. How can we look at Islamic law and Islamic thought in a way that allows the Muslims to work with, and not in confrontation with, the system and the context that we live in.”¹⁹⁷

The idea of a national and officially representative body was also reflected in ANIC which described itself in the following terms.

“The Australian National Imams Council is the only central, Islamic body that holds key representation from Australian-based Muslim clerics.

“The ANIC is currently the sole national organisation of Imams and Islamic scholars with broad community representation. This places the Council in a unique position of officially representing the wider interests of the Australian Muslim community.

¹⁹⁷ Crittenden, S. *The Mufti of Australia?*, ABC’s The Religion Report, 28 Mar 2007: <http://ab.co/HkbcIz>

“The mission of ANIC is to provide religious leadership, rulings and services to the Muslim community of Australia by supporting local Islamic organisations, developing education, social and outreach programs and fostering good relations with other religious communities and the wider Australian society in an effort to promote harmony, cooperation and successful integration within mainstream society.”¹⁹⁸

ANIC also assumed the task of appointing the mufti and has since appointed two muftis: Fehmi Naji El-Imam in June 2007, and Dr. Ibrahim Abu Mohamed in September 2011. This position of mufti has been exploited by the government to legitimise the de-radicalisation agenda. The Government’s Resilient Communities website carries a statement on radicalism from the mufti, seeking to use it for their agenda, whereby he states,

“To prevent the evolution of radicalisation from its manifestation in the individual to that of a phenomenon and from the state phenomenon to an ideology, we must collectively pool our efforts and resources to build a more resilient community that is able to confront and treat this disease.”¹⁹⁹

Imam Reference Group - NICF

It is pertinent to note the extent to which the targeting of Imams has proceeded in more recent times. There is a real and present concern that government has been able to gain significant influence over Imams bodies’ in Australia, albeit unknowingly to most Imams.

Although in a relatively early stage, the Government has proceeded to establish an Imam Reference Group (IRG), known as the National Imams Consultative Forum (NICF) in partnership with the Australian National Imams Council (ANIC) and the National Centre of Excellence for Islamic Studies (NCEIS) in order to further serve the Government’s counter violent extremism strategy.

Since early 2012, the Government has been constructing the reference group. An unclassified email circulated in June 2012 within the Counter Violent-Extremism Sub-Committee (CVESC) by a policy officer from the Attorney-General Department’s National Security Policy and Programs Branch outlined some of the details of the IRG as follows.

“In preparation for the Imam Reference Group (IRG), we’re now in a position where we would like the jurisdictions to nominate their preferred Imams. As per the funding bid, jurisdictions are able to nominate the following number of Imams:

- Seven Imams from Victoria;
- Four Imams from NSW;
- Three Imams each from Queensland and Western Australia;
- Two Imams from South Australia; and,
- One Imam each from Tasmania, the ACT and Northern Territory.

As the jurisdictions may recall, the disproportionate representation reflects the likely disparate CVE needs of the various jurisdictions, along with the size of their respective Muslim communities. The following should also be noted:

- It is intended that 3, two-day workshops will be held during the financial year, the first in August/September 2012. An outline of the purpose and functions of the IRG is attached.
- All travel and accommodation expenses will be met.

¹⁹⁸ About Australian National Imams Council (ANIC), Australian National Imams Council: <http://bit.ly/1aqeNaZ>

¹⁹⁹ Abu Mohamed, I. *Radicalism*, Grand Mufti of Australia: <http://bit.ly/1ahQdfZ>

- Thus far, we've engaged the Australian National Imams Council (ANIC), and it is supportive of the IRG and is happy to partner with us.
- Those Imams that should be nominated to participate in the IRG is a decision for each jurisdiction, but it is suggested that those will be most suitable who are active in their communities, have considerable standing, and most likely to resonate with the sort of individuals that we're expecting the Imams to engage with. It is also important that those nominated are able to meet the commitments required of participation.

On a final note, the Australian Multicultural Foundation (AMF) has already done considerable work with a number of Imams from some States (Victoria, NSW, WA and Qld)- the list of Imams is attached. They've already received some training that would enhance their effectiveness in the CVE area (including media training, Australian values, and even being exposed to basic information on radicalisation). They could, therefore, be a good fit for the IRG, which would build on the training already provided by the AMF. This, however, is a call for each jurisdiction, and is only offered as a suggestion."

In a document entitled, 'Imam Reference Group: Aims and Services', attached to the email, the following was mentioned.

"The Imam Reference Group (IRG) will provide a basis for specially trained and committed Imams from across Australia that can be used in a variety of Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) capacities. Intended as a pilot, the IRG is designed to not only provide participating Imams the necessary skills and knowledge to more effectively engage in CVE-related work, but also to propagate the IRG concept throughout all jurisdictions so that in time, each jurisdiction can develop its own, independent capability in this area...The IRG would operate under the umbrella of the Australian National Imams Council (ANIC) and will ultimately be responsible for the coordination and management of the IRG and its activities.

"The role of the IRG is two-fold. 1. In the short term, to enhance the immediate CVE capability of all participating jurisdictions by developing the skills, knowledge and commitment of participating Imams. 2. With a more long term view in mind, to enable participating Imams to act as advocates or champions of the IRG concept in their respective jurisdictions in the hope that individual States and Territories will, in time, develop their own, independent, capabilities. In other words, the long-term objective is not the establishment of a permanent, national body, but rather lay the foundations (through skills enhancement and concept propagation) for independent jurisdictional capabilities that reflect local needs and circumstances.

"With the support of government and academia, hold 3 X 2-day workshops for all IRG members intended to build their CVE-related knowledge and skills. This will include raising their knowledge in areas such as the indicators of radicalisation, the radicalisation process, Islamic militant doctrine, and appropriate counter arguments and narratives to negate the legitimacy of the extremist narrative.

"Create and maintain an IRG website that will host information which fulfils a counter-ideological utility. The website will post important fatwas that challenge the legitimacy and religious interpretations of extremist ideologues and organisations (the IRG will not formulate these fatwas. Rather, the IRG website will merely be used to host these fatwas, thereby serving as a local repository of these key texts and rulings). It could also be used to host documents such as those being translated under the currently- funded NCTC Terrorist Recantations Project.

"Compile counter arguments to those of English-speaking radical scholars (international and domestic), particularly those arguments that appear in extremist publications such as Inspire magazine. These counter arguments would then be uploaded onto the IRG's website, and also be utilised at the above- mentioned workshops and public conferences."

This type of correspondence demonstrates the deeply-concerning extent of what is taking place, with government authorities setting up initiatives for Imams in which the latter are used to implement the government agenda.

The idea of the Imam Reference Group was implemented in late 2012 in the form of the National Imams Consultative Forum (NICF). Most of the things stated in the above points back in June 2012 have been

implemented. Imams have been selected, workshops have been conducted, and a website established.

The website explains what the NICF is all about:

“The National Imams Consultative Forum (NICF) is an initiative of the NCEIS in partnership with the Australian National Imams Council (ANIC).

The NICF is an initiative that aims to empower Imams, academics and government to work together in generating awareness and useful and informed action on community safety, radicalisation and violent extremism.

“The NICF is made up of over 20 Imams from every State and Territory of Australia, representing a cross-section of Australian Muslim schools of thought. It is the first group of its kind to be formed in Australia. In its first year the NICF will convene three times to discuss issues relating to community safety, radicalisation and violent extremism in Australia. Participants will hear presentations from academic, government and community perspectives, and contribute to discussions on key issues of relevance to the NICF’s interests.

“The NICF will have a presence on the NCEIS website, which will initially include a range of resources that challenge terrorism and other forms of extremism from an Islamic perspective.”²⁰⁰

The website also carries links to ‘Fatwas, rulings and authoritative statements against terrorists in Islam; Works and statements by former extremists; and International efforts on countering radicalisation’

All three workshops intended to be held in the 2012/13 year have by now been completed. A further three are intended to be held in the 2013/14. The workshops are intended to produce specially trained Imams that can be used by the government in a “variety of Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) capacities.”

The content of the workshops is quite revealing with respect to the Government’s intent on using the Imams as a means to legitimise and their domestic and foreign policies with respect to Muslims amongst the Muslim community. We end this section with excerpts from the NICF website outlining the highlights of the workshops already conducted.

The first workshop was held in December 2012.

“The first workshop for the National Imams Consultative Forum (NICF) was held over 4th-5th December at The University of Melbourne. A total of 22 Imams from around Australia attended the workshop. The attendees were a national group, including 9 participants from Victoria, 4 from New South Wales, 3 from Western Australia, 2 from Queensland, and 1 each from South Australia, the Australian Capital Territory and the Northern Territory.

The workshop was opened by Sheikh Abdul Azim al-Afifi, President, Australian National Imams Council; Mark Duckworth, Executive Director, Citizenship and Resilience, Victorian Department of Premier and Cabinet; and Deputy Commissioner Graham Ashton, Victoria Police. An introduction to the workshop and the NICF was given by Professor Abdullah Saeed, Sultan of Oman Chair of Arab and Islamic Studies and Director of the National Centre of Excellence for Islamic Studies (NCEIS) at the University of Melbourne.

Over the course of two days participants engaged with a number of speakers, both local and international, with expertise in various aspects of radicalism, extremism, and community re-integration. These included Dr Muhammad Haniff Hassan, from the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore, and Dr Pete Lentini and Kate Barrelle, from the Global Terrorism Research Unit, Monash University. Participants also heard a number of speakers from Australian Federal Police and Victoria Police, who presented aspects of government policy on terrorism and details of past counter-terrorism operations. Imams also engaged in a fruitful group discussion on the importance of a community

²⁰⁰ *National Imams Consultative Forum*, National Centre of Excellence For Islamic Studies Australia, 18 Dec 2012: http://nceis.unimelb.edu.au/about/projects/national_imams_consultative_forum

re-integration program being implemented by the Islamic Council of Victoria.”²⁰¹

The second workshop was held in April 2013.

“The second workshop for the National Imams Consultative Forum (NICF) was held over 20th–21st April 2013 at the University of Melbourne. A total of 20 Imams attended, including 7 from Victoria, 3 from New South Wales, 2 from Western Australia, 3 from Queensland, 2 from South Australia, and one each from Tasmania, the Australian Capital Territory and the Northern Territory.

The workshop was opened by Professor Shahram Akbarzadeh, Deputy Director of the National Centre of Excellence for Islamic Studies, and a welcome was given by Sheikh Mohamadu Nawas, Public Relations Representative of the Australian National Imams Council.

Over the course of the weekend, participants engaged with a number of local and international speakers as follows:

- **Professor Scott Atran** (Centre Nationale de la Recherche Scientifique, Paris, via video conference), addressed a range of issues including the factors leading to violent radicalization, the social and educational backgrounds of those attracted to extremism, the importance of ideology and jihadist narratives, and the types of interventions that are likely to be successful in countering radicalization.
- **Mr Colin Milner** (Special Adviser, Regional Communities Outreach Program, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade) spoke about Australian regional and international policy initiatives to counter violent extremism and radicalization in the region and more broadly.
- **Imam Afroz Ali** (President, Al-Ghazzali Centre for Islamic Sciences & Human Development) discussed the process of radicalization from his experience as a community leader and gave examples of initiatives that have successfully brought about a personal change in individuals formerly socially alienated or attracted to extremism.
- **Dr Abdul Haqq Baker** (Lecturer in Terrorism studies at the University of St. Andrews’ Centre for Studies in Terrorism and Political Violence, via teleconference) discussed the experience of working with young people at risk of radicalization in the UK context, giving examples from the STREET (Strategy to Reach Empower and Educate Teenagers) initiative in London, including actions taken to gain the trust of young people and deconstruct radical narratives.
- **Dr Abdul Rahman al-Hadlaq** (General Director of Ideological Security Directorate, Ministry of Interior for Saudi Arabia) detailed the Saudi government’s extensive rehabilitation program for former extremists, including in-house programs as well as community re-integration, and touching on the reasons why young people are attracted to extremism.
- **Associate Professor Mohamad Abdalla** (Griffith Islamic Research Unit, Griffith University), gave an overview of the experience of Queensland Muslim community leaders, who have so far been able to work together to head off any potential threats of extremism or radicalization among community groups, as well as initiating a number of important research projects in the area.
- **Mr Rod Wise** (Deputy Commissioner, Corrections Victoria) provided an overview of the issues that have so far arisen, and the lessons learned, in managing individuals detained and/or convicted on terrorism charges in Victorian prisons, and steps taken to address these issues.
- **His Honour Richard Maidment SC** (Judge of the County Court of Victoria) outlined his view on the need for counter-terrorism laws in Australia, as well as giving a frank assessment of the successes and failures in their implementation to date.”²⁰²

²⁰¹ *Workshop one (4th - 5th December 2012) highlights*, National Centre of Excellence For Islamic Studies Australia, 18 Mar 2013: http://nceis.unimelb.edu.au/about/projects/national_imams_consultative_forum/workshop_one

²⁰² *Workshop two (20th - 21st April 2013) highlights*, National Centre of Excellence For Islamic Studies Australia, 24 Apr 2013: http://nceis.unimelb.edu.au/about/projects/national_imams_consultative_forum/workshop_two

The third workshop, held in June 2013, was the most revealing to date and clearly spells out the government agenda in forming this IRG. It was held over 22nd–23rd June at the University of Melbourne and attended by a total of 21 imams, 10 from Victoria, 3 from New South Wales, 2 from Western Australia, 2 from Queensland, 2 from South Australia, and one each from Tasmania and the Northern Territory.

Around about the same time as this workshop, Today Tonight brought out the self-proclaimed ‘former extremist’ Maajid Nawaz from the UK. Today Tonight spent days in trying to get him an audience with the Muslim community for their segment. The response from the community was a resounding rejection of Maajid Nawaz and his flawed counter-radicalisation narrative with only two people attending the seminar organised by Today Tonight.

Finding no audience from among the community, the NICF gave him an audience of Imams at the third workshop. This indicates government involvement in projecting the likes of Maajid Nawaz and what he represents. Maajid’s articles are also carried on the government’s ‘Resilient Communities’ website.

Today Tonight ran the story about the “former Islamic Radical” and Maajid Nawaz brought to the spotlight Afroz Ali’s statement in the 2nd NICF workshop in which he said:

“...something which I don’t necessarily share to widely in public, but I am very happy to share here, is that Al-Ghazzali centre, which is now Seekers Hub Global, we actually have had a program for the last approximately 7 years now in which we have had 240 people who were essentially, qualitatively, people who we identified as people who were radical, people who were considered to be moving in a direction which may have lead them to violent radicalisation, to terrorism...what we have found is that of the 240 people, 120, exactly half of them that we are absolutely sure are people who have changed their paradigm, have changed their thinking and their mindset because they have been able to hear another narrative.”²⁰³

This gave the impression that violent extremism was rampant, a notion latched on to by Nawaz and Today Tonight.

Other presentations at the third workshop, as summarised on the NICF website, were as follows.

- **Mr David Irvine AO**, Director-General, Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (ASIO) gave an overview of the functions of ASIO and its operations over the past 60 years. Mr Irvine provided examples of ASIO’s current operations in relation to countering terrorism and the importance of community leaders in promoting communal harmony.
- **Mr Nasir Abas**, former Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) member shared his experiences of how and what drew him into the terrorist organisation, and how and why he renounced his association with JI and began assisting the Indonesian Police and government in combating terrorism.
- **Mr Maajid Nawaz**, Co-Founder and Chairman of the Quilliam Foundation, UK recounted time spent in his youth as a leadership member of a global Islamist group and the factors that led to his radicalisation. Maajid then described his gradual transformation towards rejection of extremism and withdrawal from his former group, Hizb ut-Tahrir.
- **Sheikh Abdul Azim al-Afifi**, President of the Australian National Imams Council engaged participants in a discussion on the different meanings of jihad and offered examples of non-violent forms of *jihad* in the Australian context – such as engaging in interfaith dialogue, taking part in the Australian political process and assisting in humanitarian efforts. He noted the need to engage with Australians who were drawn into the conflict in Syria and the associated negative effects on society. Finally, he argued that

²⁰³ Ibid.

there are many peaceful ways of assisting victims of war, and peaceful means will in the long run gain many more supporters than violence.

- **Professor Abdullah Saeed**, Director of NCEIS, University of Melbourne facilitated a hypothetical scenario involving a situation of potential radicalisation within the community. It was noted that young persons who become radicalised may not respect mainstream imams as figures of religious authority. Participants discussed possible approaches and points of intervention by community leaders in partnership with law enforcement and other authorities in order to prevent a negative incident occurring.²⁰⁴

The facilitation and reflection of the government agenda is quite clear in this with such things as ASIO being given the opportunity to sell and characterise its work in positive terms, notwithstanding the well-known underhanded tactics it employs against the Muslim community; non-violent groups with perfectly legitimate Islamic ideals such as Hizb ut-Tahrir being characterised as extreme; Islamic concepts such as jihad being modified; and Muslims being discouraged from going to Syria to assist their oppressed brothers and sisters.

The fourth workshop is scheduled to be held this month, on 23-24 November, and will have a focus on the issue of Jihad.

Targeting other community leaders

The Government's attempt to create a compliant community leadership is not restricted to targeting Imams. It extends also to targeting other community leaders: those people leading organisations, mosque committees, councils and the like. Here too the same two broad approaches are employed: recruitment of existing leaders and the nurturing and training of new leaders.

The recruiting of existing leaders began in 2005 by the Howard Government. The process began with a specific invitation to a carefully selected group community leaders and youth representatives. Then chief executive of the Australian Federation of Islamic Councils (AFIC) Amjad Ali Mehboob revealed the one-sided nature of the meeting and what was to follow in the formation of a 'reference group'.

"We have received a letter from the prime minister but it was only a general letter. A limited number of people are going to be invited. The prime minister is calling the meeting, the government department...is working it out.- Amjad Mehboob, August 2005.²⁰⁵

The meeting with the 14 chosen community leaders occurred on 23 August 2005, the purpose of which was quite clear as far as the Government was concerned.

"I'll be putting to them the need for them to assume positions of leadership and responsibility within their own community. I'll be reminding them, as I remind all Australians, our common values as Australians transcend any other allegiance or commitments that we have...We're not in the business of renegotiating the values of this country to accommodate any minority, be it Islamic or otherwise." – John Howard, Prime Minister, August 2005.²⁰⁶

"...the Prime Minister met in Canberra today with 14 members of the mainstream Islamic community - a meeting designed to improve relations between Muslims and the wider community as part of a Government strategy to prevent terrorism in Australia. Mr Howard said later he had sought advice from the Muslim

²⁰⁴ *Workshop three (22nd - 23rd June 2013) highlights*, National Centre of Excellence For Islamic Studies Australia, 24 Jul 2013: http://nceis.unimelb.edu.au/about/projects/national_imams_consultative_forum/workshop_three

²⁰⁵ *Muslim Leaders to meet PM*, The Daily Telegraph, 18 August 2005

²⁰⁶ ABC News. *Muslim group unveils plan to tackle radicals*, Australian Broadcasting Corporation, 22 Aug 2005: <http://ab.co/19FStHI>

leaders on ways to totally satisfy the Government that appropriate denunciations and repudiations of terrorism within the Islamic education system do occur.”²⁰⁷

The meeting produced a ‘Statement of Principles’²⁰⁸ which highlight the Government’s imposition of a set of directives onto the Muslim community via the explicit approval of community leaders. The statement begins with,

“An overriding loyalty to Australia, and a commitment to its traditions, values and institutions is the common bond that unites us all.”

And proceeds with an agreement between the community leaders and the government, amongst other things, on that,

“Members of the Muslim faith, and in particular its leaders, have a responsibility to challenge and counteract those who seek to encourage the use of violence and terrorism in the name of Islam. The government must support and encourage Islamic leaders to challenge and to eradicate extremism.”

The meeting resulted in the Government and the community leaders present in complete agreement and ready to work together, as expressed in the press conference²⁰⁹ directly after the meeting addressed by Prime Minister John Howard and AFIC President Dr. Ameer Ali.

“We need the assistance of the Islamic leadership and the Islamic leadership needs our assistance and we’ve agreed on a framework to move forward.” – Prime Minister, John Howard, August 2005.

“...we are not here to change the foreign policy of this country. We came here with a focus of discussing the security issues, the problem that the Australian community is facing-there is a problem with it, we recognise that, there is a problem, and we’ve decided to have this dialogue to continue in a smaller groups...in the future which will make practical suggestions to the Government with regard to training of the imam’s, the schools curricula, the youth problem, the women in our society, so on and so forth.” Ameer Ali, August 2005.

Following on from this meeting, the Government announced on 15 September 2005 the formation of the *Muslim Community Reference Group* comprising of the attendees of the initial meeting. The newly formed reference group was to ‘work with the Australian Government and Muslim communities’.

“The group announced today will be working with the Australian Government, and with their respective community groups in creating communication and support networks that will promote understanding between the Muslim community and the wider Australian community.”²¹⁰

Along with the national Muslim Reference Group, state level reference groups were also then formed. The state-based groups would provide recommendations to the federal reference group and “act as a conduit for ideas from the Federal Government to the Muslim communities.”²¹¹ And, of course, as a means for the Government to sell its policies to the Muslim community. The Reference Group, for instance, rubber stamped the Howard Government’s draconian Anti-Terror Laws.

“We realise the current environment, the need for these laws. We also need protection. We were rather concerned about the way these laws are going to be implemented. Having listened to the Attorney-General

²⁰⁷ O’Brien, K. *Mainstream Australia ‘must include Muslims’*, ABC’s The 7:30 Report, 23 Aug 2005: <http://ab.co/16EiCr>

²⁰⁸ *Council of Australian Governments’ Special Meeting on Counter-Terrorism: Meeting with Islamic Community Leaders* - 23 August 2005, Council of Australian Governments (COAG) Archive, 27 Sep 2005: <http://bit.ly/1imvc2R>

²⁰⁹ Howard, J. *Joint Press Conference with Dr Ameer Ali President, Australian Federation of Islamic Councils Parliament House, Canberra*, 23 Aug 2005: <http://pmtranscripts.dpmc.gov.au/browse.php?did=21878>

²¹⁰ Cobb, J. *New Initiatives Connecting Australia’s Muslim Community*, Minister for Immigration and Citizenship, 15 Sep 2005: <http://archive.is/XHy7k>

²¹¹ Dowling, J. *Howard move on Muslim dialogue*, The Age, 11 Sep 2005: <http://bit.ly/1fr0ubP>

and Honourable Minister John Cobb, we are being more comfortable in the assurances provided and the safeguards that are ingrained in these laws. And therefore, we think that *we can now sell these to our community with much easier... with much more comfort, because we think that there's adequate, it's balanced laws, it has enough safeguards and it protects us from any incident that might happen in this country.*" – Ameer Ali, AFIC President, October 2005.²¹² [Italics emphasis ours]

The first meeting of the Muslim Community Reference Group (MCRG) was held on 21 September 2005 and proceeded to operate in line with the MCRG 'Terms of reference', which state (italics emphasis ours),

"The Muslim Community Reference Group will assist the Australian Government to move forward from the Prime Minister's Summit with Muslim community leaders of 23 August 2005, by:

- i) acting as an external advisory group in relation to issues outlined in the Statement of Principles issued at the Summit, in particular to take a lead working with Muslim communities and organisations to promote harmony, mutual understanding and Australian values and to challenge violence, ignorance and rigid thinking;
- ii) facilitating strategic working relationships and communication between government, the Muslim community, and the wider community;
- iii) providing advice on specific matters referred to it by the Minister; and
- iv) reporting to the Minister on its activities and achievements.

The Reference Group will meet as required by the Minister and, outside these meetings."²¹³

In one of his addresses to the MCRG, Andrew Robb explicitly stated what the Government had ordered the group to do,

"At the last meeting of the MCRG and sub-groups, I asked you to work with the Government and the wider community so that everything possible is done to:

- stop extremists from entering and staying in Australia;
- prevent extremists from manipulating and recruiting impressionable young Muslims, and
- create an environment which enables all young Australian Muslims to become productive members of our society through education and meaningful employment."²¹⁴

In the execution of its tasks, the MCRG was further divided into sub-groups with additional members from the Muslim community brought in. The groups were given the following meeting dates:

Reference Group meeting dates		Sub-Group meeting dates	
2005	2006	2005	2006
- 21 September	- 27 February	- 7 October	- 28 February
- 6 October	- 15 June	- 30 November	- 14 June
- 29 November			

The sub-groups were divided into 6 groups:

- Education and Training of Clerical and Lay Teachers and Leaders

²¹² McGrath, C. *Govt Muslim Reference Group endorses counter-terrorism laws*, ABC's The World Today, 6 Oct 2005: <http://www.abc.net.au/worldtoday/content/2005/s1476176.htm>

²¹³ Muslim Community Reference Group. *Building on social cohesion, harmony and security: An action plan by the Muslim Community Reference Group*, Sep 2006, p. 41: <http://bit.ly/17IB5hp>

²¹⁴ Robb, A. *Address to the Muslim Community Reference Group*, Rydges Capital Hill Canberra, 2 Aug 2006: <http://bit.ly/1gy9E5l>

- Issues Related to Schooling
- Engaging with Youth
- Engaging with Women
- Improving Employment Outcomes and Workplace Issues
- Improving Crisis Management

The roles of these sub-groups were also well-defined, the one relevant to leaders as follows.

“Education and Training of Clerical and Lay Teachers and Leaders

This sub-group will:

- take a lead role in working with Muslim communities and organizations to identify ways in which the education and training of clerical and lay teachers and leaders in Australia can be developed and how such leadership roles may be enhanced
- identify ways that clerical and lay teachers and leaders can reduce the potential isolation of young Muslims; and promote harmony, mutual understanding and Australian values; as well as challenge violence, ignorance and extremism, where it exists
- suggest ways that religious leaders can be empowered to reinforce the message to Muslim youth, their parents and Australians generally, that Islam is compatible with Australian values and culture, and that it can live comfortably alongside and engage with other faiths.” [Italics emphasis ours]²¹⁵

The second approach adopted by the Government in attempting to create a compliant Muslim community leadership is to nurture and train new leaders. Training of leaders, both ‘faith and community leaders’, has extended to both Australia-born individuals as well those existing leaders originally from abroad. The National Action Plan (NAP) of 2005-2010 initiated the process and the current Countering Violent Extremism initiatives have continued with them.

The NAP included such actions as to:

- build leadership capacity in communities, members of which might be susceptible to radicalisation, so that all leaders can be proactive in addressing the potential for extremism within their own communities
- support leaders and teachers from different cultural and religious backgrounds by providing learning materials and professional development opportunities to learn about Australian values, to enable them to effectively guide their communities to greater mainstream involvement
- encouraging all faith and community leaders to promote respect and mutual understanding and tolerance across communities, including through multi-faith and multicultural collaboration and activities
- providing professional development opportunities in an Australian context, which will promote greater understanding of Australian values and culture
- supporting the development of appropriate institutional training for communities with identified faith-based professional development needs
- encouraging community leaders to inform their members about the cultural norms of mainstream Australian society
- introducing professional development courses for newly-arrived religious workers, leaders and

²¹⁵ Australian Government. *Sub-Groups of the Muslim Community Reference Group*, Department of Immigration and Citizenship: <http://bit.ly/17pkyXB>

teachers from overseas.²¹⁶

The leadership training was targeted with very specific objectives.

“Governments will work with such leaders to ensure that their views are conveyed effectively in a manner consistent with the Australian values and principles referred to earlier.”²¹⁷

The MCRG as a government lackey

The first Muslim Community Reference Group established by the Howard government functioned for 12 months. Although the group was largely discredited in the eyes of the community, it gave a glimpse of the servitude that such a reference group would deliver to the government. In the final report issued by the MCRG to the government, it presented its Action Plan that resulted from the scheduled meetings and workshops. Even a cursory glance into the contents of the report shows little to no departure from the Government’s pre-set National Action Plan policies. The following are some such excerpts.

“The MCRG believes in the importance of projects and initiatives flowing from the National Action Plan having clear guidelines and measures for reporting so their impact can be monitored and inform any future initiatives.

“More than 40 projects were proposed by the MCRG and its Sub-Groups for consideration in the development and implementation of the National Action Plan to Build on Social Cohesion, Harmony and Security (the National Action Plan).

“While the MCRG has recognised the critical role of Imams in the community as leaders and mentors and the opportunities they have to guide young Muslims, it also recognises the need to develop leadership for current and future generations of Muslims in Australia. The MCRG suggested various proposals including professional development opportunities through Australian educational institutions, and a framework for formalising the qualifications of Imams.

“The MCRG Engaging with Women Sub-Group, Education and Training of Clerical and Lay Teachers and Leaders Sub-Group, Engaging with Youth Sub-Group, Crisis Management Sub-Group and Family and Community Sub-Groups all produced recommendations and proposals to the Australian Government on addressing marginalisation and radicalisation.

“The Conference of Australian Imams with contributions from Muslim leaders, women and youth took place in September 2006. This two-day conference in Sydney, brought together some 100 Imams and other religious leaders, as well as other stakeholders, to raise awareness about the role of Imams in promoting community harmony and preventing rigid thinking. A central objective of the conference was to focus on issues of training and education in Australia of Imams, and other religious leaders.

“Muslim community initiatives that promote and recognise the Islamic qualifications and experiences of religious leaders, teachers and other professionals will benefit from the Australian Government’s action to fund the establishment of the National Centre of Excellence for Islamic Studies at an Australian university or group of universities

“This project [*Building Identity and Resisting Radicalisation*] will assist the Muslim community to construct an ‘Australian Muslim Identity’.”²¹⁸

The persistent controversy surrounding the MCRG meant the group soon went out of favour and was dropped by the government in late-2006, but only after it fulfilled its role in reflecting, legitimising and rubber-stamping government policy, thereby facilitating its implementation on the Muslim community.

²¹⁶ Australian Government, Dept. of Immigration, *A National Action Plan to Build on Social Cohesion, Harmony and Security*, 2005: <http://bit.ly/1gy8oz7>

²¹⁷ Ibid.

²¹⁸ Muslim Community Reference Group. *Building on social cohesion, harmony and security: An action plan by the Muslim Community Reference Group*, Sep 2006: <http://bit.ly/171B5hp>

The Rudd Labour Government, which came to power in late-2007, flirted with the idea of resurrecting the MCRG but instead seems to have been satisfied with a greater focus on Imams and working with the likes of ANIC as a leadership body for the Muslim community – as discussed in detail in the preceding section on targeting Imams- whilst also working closely with other community leaders such as organisation and council presidents.

Conclusion

On the whole, it must be said that the Government has been successful to a great extent in using the community leadership, both Imams and others, for their agenda in the area of counter-terrorism. This is demonstrated by many things.

One, it is reflected in the large degree of uptake by community leaders in Government counter-terrorism projects programs and projects. Whether it be AFP or ASIO ‘engagement’, Attorney-General CVE grants, or Imams’ body initiatives, these have all be taken up and accepted.

Two, it is also reflected in the lack of any rigorous critique of the Government’s counter-terrorism policy by community leaders, notwithstanding that the policy is extremely flawed, politicised and of adverse impact to the Muslim community. Apart from mild objections and reservations expressed, by a minority, at some aspects such as draconian laws or details of certain policies, there is absolutely no solid or sustained critique of the Government policy. Foreign policy excesses in particular – the elephant in the room – are avoided just as the Government would like them to be.

One of the more extreme manifestations of this was observed in October 2010. As the entire country - media, policymakers, opinion-makers, commentators- was debating Australian involvement in Afghanistan for over a month, the community leadership had nothing to contribute, except to look on as observers to a debate about whether the Government is to continue its invasion of a Muslim land or not.

Three, it is reflected in the adoption and internalisation of the Government’s counter-terrorism narrative and agenda by the community leaders, inclusive of language.

The government narrative for over a decade now has essentially been that ‘terrorism’ is basically Muslims attacking western interests, the primary cause thereof is extreme interpretations of Islam by ‘radicals’ who exploited ‘perceived grievances’ about western actions in Muslim lands, and the solution is military attacks against terrorists and a more broad ideological struggle against ‘radical Islam’ by promoting ‘moderate Islam’. ‘Moderate’ Muslims are to assume responsibility for dealing with the problem because it was rooted in their community, prove their loyalties to the country, condemn the radicals, and lead the work, backed and funded by government, of countering radical Islam by moderate Islam.

The exact same narrative using the exact same language is articulated by community leaders, in their actions if not in words as well. The imbalances of the government are also reflected in gross imbalances by community leaders. For instance, leading organisations and councils are vehement, unequivocal and consistent in condemning violence perpetrated by Muslims but virtually silent on the far worse violence perpetrated by the Australian Government and its allies.

The National Imams Consultative Forum, for example, has two media releases up on its website since its

inception about a year ago. One is a condemnation of the Boston bombing²¹⁹, the other a condemnation of the Woolwich attack issued by ANIC.²²⁰

No such releases condemning the actions of the Australian Government in the same period, such as its policy moves against the Islamic mujahideen in Syria, its support for the bloody coup of al-Sisi in Egypt, deliberate underhanded tactics such as entrapment by ASIO, and the like are to be found.

²¹⁹ The National Imams Consultative Forum. *Media Statement Re: Boston Bombings*, NCEIS Australia, 22 Apr 2013: <http://bit.ly/Hpq16m>

²²⁰ Press Statement, *Australian National Imams Council*, 23 May 2013: <http://bit.ly/HnjQ3H>



SECTION IX

TARGETING MUSLIM YOUTH AND ISLAMIC SCHOOLS

The youth of any community represent its capital and future. The strength and potential of a community depends on the strength of its youth. It comes as no surprise, then, that a key focus area of the government intervention in the Muslim community is Muslim youth.

“I have great hopes for our young Australia Muslims to take on leadership roles and build bridges with non-Muslim Australians.”²²¹ - Minister for Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs, John Cobb, November 2005.

“Our goal is to help members of our communities to be less vulnerable to the process of radicalisation and violent extremism....As a first step, the Government has sought to address some of these issues through our inaugural ‘Youth Mentoring Grants’ program. The grants provide funding for programs that directly support young people away from intolerant and radical ideologies and encourage positive participation in our community. With nearly 100 applications, the Government received overwhelming interest in the program, reflecting the community’s commitment to developing local initiatives to prevent extremism amongst our young people.”²²² – Robert McClelland, Attorney-General, March 2011.

Muslim youth are targeted by government through various means, most prominently through educational institutions such as schools and universities, and through various initiatives such as leadership programs, youth summits, exchange programs, mentoring programs, sporting and cultural activities and interfaith dialogue. Indeed, the vast majority of community projects under the National Action Plan of the Howard and Rudd eras and Building Community Resilience programs of more recent times have focused on youth.

The objectives of these activities are multifarious but at their essence is the aim of making Muslim youth adopt and practice a personal, secularised Islam, whereby they understand Islam as a personal faith, equal with other faiths and subordinate to the prevalent secular democratic system. In turn, the aim is to involve the youth in mainstream politics, sports and culture, diverting them away from key Islamic creedal concepts and actions such as enjoining the right and forbidding the wrong, adopting the concept of one global *ummah* and working for its interests, *Khilafah*, *jihad*, accounting the rulers, and presenting the Islamic way of life as a radical alternative to the current world order.

Youth groups and summits

The focus on the youth was seen early in the form of the MCRG’s Muslim Youth Sub-Group established in late 2005 and youth summits it organised. The National Muslim Youth Summit was held in December 2005, followed by numerous state-level youth summits throughout the next two years.

These summits were ostensibly for government to hear the issues of Muslim youth, but were used for little more than to rubber stamp and provide legitimacy for the Government’s pre-set agenda. The six core issues allegedly identified by delegates at the national summit- a ‘perceived’ conflict between Muslim and Australian identity, inter-generational conflict, marginalisation, unemployment, the media, and community building – and the suggested solutions²²³ were all in line with the agenda already articulated by the government. Issues like foreign policy – well-known to be an issue amongst Muslim youth at the time – somehow did not register.

“A key aspect of community consultation has been the National Muslim Youth Summit held on 3-4 December 2005 as well as state and territory specific youth summits that are being held throughout 2006.”²²⁴ MCRG Action Plan, September 2006

²²¹ Ley, S & Cobb, J. *Young Muslims congregate for harmony*, Dept. of Families, Housing & Indigenous Affairs, 30 Nov 2005: <http://bit.ly/19JQ1Dn>

²²² McClelland, R. *Address to the NSC Senior Executive Development Course Dinner*, Old Parliament House Canberra, 10 Mar 2011: <http://bit.ly/1ax3Whh>

²²³ Summit Communique, *National Muslim Youth Summit*: <http://bit.ly/1g4FSX4>

²²⁴ Muslim Community Reference Group. *Building on social cohesion, harmony and security: An action plan by the MCRG*, Sep 2006: <http://bit.ly/17IB5hp>

“The Australian Multicultural Foundation, in collaboration with the Federal Government’s Muslim Youth Sub-Group and the Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs, invited 66 young Australian Muslims from every state and territory, who came together to discuss those issues concerning young Australian Muslims. Most importantly, the Summit has focused on finding practical solutions to key issues such as: identity, relationships, employment/education and training, and discrimination.”²²⁵ - Muslim Youth Summit communiqué, December 2005

8-9 Apr 2006	Northern Territory Islamic Youth Forums (Darwin and Alice Springs)
30 Apr 2006	Youthfest (Victoria)
6 May 2006	Victorian Muslim Youth Summit
30 Jul 2006	Victorian Multifaith Multicultural Forum
29 Oct 2006	South Australian Muslim Youth Summit
10 Nov 2006	ACT Muslim Youth Summit at Australasian Police Bureau Meeting
25 Nov 2006	Independent Centre of Research Australia (ICRA) Youth Centre's 'All Eyez on Youth' Conference in NSW
Jan-Mar 2007	Al-Nisa Youth Group's Queensland Muslim Youth Forums
13 Feb 2007	Tasmanian Muslim Youth Summit
21 Feb 2007	Forum on Australia's Islamic Relations (FAIR) Muslim Youth Summit in NSW
13 Apr 2007	'Living in Multicultural Canberra' Youth Summit
27 May 2007	Western Australian Muslim Youth Summit

Islamic Schools

Islamic schools have also been the target of the Government’s counter-terrorism agenda, particularly through the imposition of Australian values.

Not long after the 9/11 attacks in the US, Brendan Nelson, then Minister for Education commissioned a ‘values education’ study in July 2002, with the unanimous support of the State and Territory Ministers at the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA).

The result of this study was the National Framework for Values Education, launched by John Howard and Brendan Nelson in 2004. Its aim was to place ‘Australian values’ much more prominently in education policy. \$31 billion of federal education funding was made available tied, importantly, to the implementation of the new framework.

‘Values education’ is the deliberate infusing of certain values in education so students adopt these values. Formally, it refers to “any explicit and/or implicit school-based activity to promote student understanding and knowledge of values, and to inculcate the skills and dispositions of students so they can enact particular values as individuals and as members of the wider community.”²²⁶

The ‘guiding principles’ of the National Framework for Values Education in Australian Schools, “recognise that in all contexts schools promote, foster and transmit values to all students and that education is as much about building character as it is about equipping students with specific skills. They also recognise that

²²⁵ Note 222

²²⁶ Curriculum Corporation. *Values Education Study Final Report*, Department of Education, Science and Training, Aug 2003, p. 2: http://www.valueseducation.edu.au/verve/_resources/VES_Final_Report14Nov.pdf

schools are not value-free or value-neutral zones of social and educational engagement.”²²⁷

Values, here, are defined as,

“... the principles and fundamental convictions which act as general guides to behaviour, the standards by which particular actions are judged as good or desirable,” and “the ideals that give significance to our lives, that are reflected through the priorities that we choose, and that we act on consistently and repeatedly.”²²⁸

Brendan Nelson re-launched the *National Framework for Values Education following the London bombings in 2005, outlining the values he felt all Australian children should learn. He linked these ‘Australian’ values explicitly to the Anzac narrative of Simpson and his donkey.*

He subsequently warned Islamic schools that they must teach Australian values,

“The Islamic Council and the Islamic schools have been working very hard to teach very good values to their children. We want to make sure that not just those schools, but all schools that educate all Australian children, including Islamic children, are focused on Australian values, to make sure that not perhaps just the students, but also the teachers fully understand our values, our beliefs, and the way we relate to one another, and see our place in the world.”²²⁹

“If you want to be an Australian, if you want to raise your children in Australia, we fully expect those children to be taught and to accept Australian values and beliefs. We want them to understand our history and our culture, the extent to which we believe in mateship and giving another person a fair go, *and basically if people don’t want to support and accept and adopt and teach Australian values then, they should clear off.*”²³⁰ – Brendan Nelson, August 2005. [Italics emphasis ours]

Targeting schools was, in turn, a key part of the *National Action Plan*.

“The education and training sectors are fundamental in equipping students of all ages and backgrounds with the skills, democratic values and principles for effective participation in a culturally, linguistically and religiously diverse society.”²³¹

This push saw immediate and surprising results. Islamic schools like Malek Fahd Islamic School, the largest Islamic school in Sydney, after previously having no such activities, started flying the Australian flag, celebrating Anzac Day and ‘Democracy week’ annually.

This approach continued under the Rudd Labour Government.

“Only the other week, I caught up with some colleagues from a State police force. I heard about their plans to engage with schools and address extremism through education.”²³² – Robert McClelland, Attorney-General, July 2009.

The government interference in and dictation to Islamic schools went so far as drawing up a new curriculum for Islamic studies, led by the avowedly secular NCEIS.

²²⁷ Australian Govt. *National Framework for Values Education in Australian Schools*, Dept. of Education, Science & Training, 2005, pg. 5: <http://bit.ly/9tbG5H>

²²⁸ Note 225

²²⁹ Hawley, S. *Brendan Nelson addresses Islamic schools on Australian values*, ABC’s *The World Today*, 24 Aug 2005: <http://www.abc.net.au/worldtoday/content/2005/s1445094.htm>

²³⁰ ABC News. *Govt to enter mosques in anti-terrorism crackdown*, Australian Broadcasting Corporation, 25 Aug 2005: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2005-08-24/govt-to-enter-mosques-in-anti-terrorism-crackdown/2088186>

²³¹ Australian Govt. Dept. of Immigration, *A National Action Plan to Build on Social Cohesion, Harmony and Security*, 2005: <http://bit.ly/1gy8oz7>

²³² McClelland, R. *Speech To The Australian Strategic Policy Institute*, Canberra, 21 Jul 2009: <http://bit.ly/17kiu5e>

“In collaboration with the leadership and teachers of selected Islamic schools and Muslim peak bodies, the NCEIS will design and develop a Common Curriculum Framework (CCF) for teaching Islamic Studies in Australian Islamic primary and secondary schools. The CCF will help to create discerning students, who are able to differentiate mainstream, traditional Islam from violent extremism. Subjects, such as the Qur’an and Islamic History, will be presented with adherence to traditional principles. Acknowledging Australia’s multicultural context, the CCF will also include a range of new topics which address issues relevant to Muslims in Australia, such as: Islam and the modern state, Islam and women, and Islam and other faiths.”²³³

Such interventions in Islamic schools were also endorsed by the Government’s hand-picked Muslim Community Reference Group in its Action Plan Report (2006)²³⁴.

“The social isolation facing many Australian Muslims, particularly the young, both at school and in the community, will be challenged by promoting interfaith and intercultural cooperation through school education, redesigned school curricula, sport, mentoring and volunteering. Research into education and employment will examine how Australia’s education and employment systems encourage integration and where they fall short.” (p. 7)

The same report outlines some of the Government’s initiatives with respect to Islamic schools:

“The Showcase Seminar: *Encouraging Tolerance and Social Cohesion through School Education* was held on 25-26 May 2006 in the Parliament House, Canberra. It aimed to present key findings and good practice case studies from the research project mentioned above, and to facilitate discussion about interfaith and intercultural cooperation within the context of the National Framework for Values Education in Australian Schools. The Seminar was attended by 75 participants (with 50 fully-funded) including representatives of Islamic schools, government and non-government schools, teachers, principals, education authorities and students.” (p. 18-19)

“The Islamic charity I-Care was given funding to conduct a four day Youth Camp in Queensland in June 2006 to encourage interaction between Islamic schools and other faith and non-faith based schools.” (p. 19)

“The Australian Government, through the National Action Plan, is funding *Project Abraham: Reaching Out To Country*, which aims to increase knowledge, awareness and understanding of the commonalities that Muslims, Jews and Christians have in the context of exploring contemporary social issues. Project Abraham seeks to do this through undertaking interfaith seminars (including around contemporary community-based issues) and facilitating the development of associated community projects, and establishing and showing an exhibition and conducting schools visits, as well as developing sustainable partnerships within and between each selected community, among educators and religious and community leaders.” (p. 24)

Interfaith dialogue – a type which seeks to show Islam as equal to all other faiths, all themselves equally subordinate to the secular system - has been a prominent activity pushed by government for youth with particular attention placed upon Muslim participation.

“A schools project uniting Christians, Muslim and Jews will reinforce Australia’s proud tradition of respect for racial and religious diversity in the Australian community. Engaging young people in these sorts of programs helps to emphasise the importance of tolerance and respect for cultures and religions. Australia is one of the most diverse populations in the world, in fact Australia is the most ethnically diverse nation in the world. Yet we are united by a common set of values and freedoms, including religious freedom. We are very good at integrating people from all over the globe but we have to keep working at it. In this regard, initiatives such as this one are important.”²³⁵ - Andrew Robb, July 2006

“Young Australians within some disadvantaged communities will benefit from a \$1.05 million new values based initiative in education...Building on the Government’s initiatives in civics, citizenship education and values education, the new proposal will address existing gaps in Australian schools curricula and activities.

²³³ Australian Government, Attorney-General’s Department, *Victoria*, Resilient Communities: <http://bit.ly/1bs7Bva>

²³⁴ Muslim Community Reference Group. *Building on social cohesion, harmony and security: An action plan by the Muslim Community Reference Group*, Sep 2006: <http://bit.ly/171B5hp>

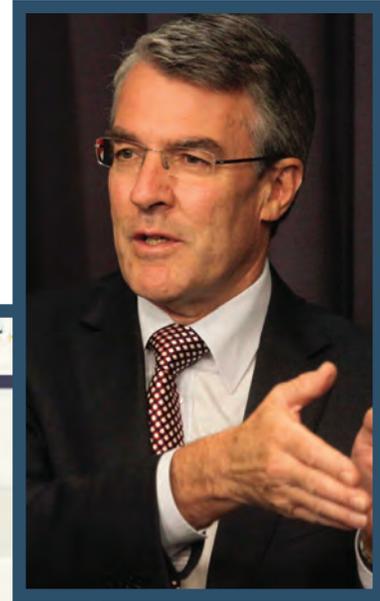
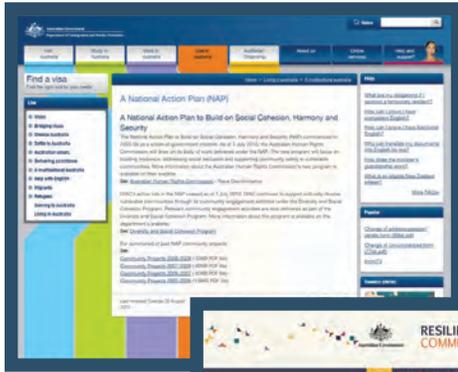
²³⁵ Robb, A. *Young Australians Learn About Accepting Religious Diversity*, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Immigration and Multicultural Affairs, 2 Jul 2006: <http://bit.ly/1dzwWrE>

“The proposal involves the establishment of a programme to support ideas and projects that promote interfaith and intercultural understanding in school settings – particularly linking Islamic students, their parents and leaders with the rest of the community, including members of other faiths, such as Christian and Jewish. The education proposal is an initiative which forms part of the National Action Plan for social cohesion, harmony and security.

“Key benefits of the programme will include a broader mutual understanding, reducing the potential isolation of some students, and promoting the Australian values of a fair go, justice and democracy. This will be helpful to all Australians- particularly our youth- who want to understand the role of religion in Australia.

“Integration amongst all Australians- whatever their faith- is the best way to prevent extremists getting a toehold in Australia.”²³⁶- Joint Media Release, Minister for Science, Education and Training, Julie Bishop, and Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Immigration and Multicultural Affairs, Andrew Robb, July 2006

²³⁶ Bishop, J & Robb, A. *New Education Initiatives to Benefit Young Australians National Action Plan*, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Immigration and Multicultural Affairs, 16 Jul 2006: <http://bit.ly/1g4Hyjq>



Australian Government

Building Community Resilience Program – 2012-13 Projects

Grant Applicant: Islamic Council of Victoria
Project Name: The Community Reconnect Project
Location: Victoria
Project Details: The 'Community Reconnect Project' will build resilience amongst Victorian Somali youth and encourage and empower community resistance to the influence of extremism. The project will offer direct support in the form of mentoring for vulnerable young men and will develop educational material through production of a DVD and internet-based video material. While the project will be based in Melbourne, educational material developed, and the project's advisory group, will connect with major areas of Somali community Australia wide.
Funding Amount: \$100,000

Grant Applicant: The Islamic Society of South Australia Incorporated
Project Name: Defining Moderate Islam to Muslims and non-Muslims
Location: South Australia
Project Details: The 'Defining Moderate Islam to Muslims and non-Muslims' project aims to address community misconceptions about Islam and promote cultural understanding and inclusion. The project will include leadership and mentoring workshops, media training, and cross-cultural and interfaith community activities for Muslims and non-Muslims to help counter violent extremist ideologies.
Funding Amount: \$20,000

Grant Applicant: Lebanese Muslim Association
Project Name: The Positive Intellect Project (PI Project)
Location: New South Wales
Project Details: The project will develop an educational program that provides young community members with skills to encourage dialogue, empower them to engage with, and positively contribute to, society. The curriculum will be developed by respected moderate scholars and other academics in the fields of politics and sociology—with a special emphasis on education to build peace, foster acceptance and promote coexistence. The project will also provide opportunities for participants to express arguments against violent ideologies and create a space for genuinely open discussion about difficult political and religious issues.
Funding Amount: \$100,000

SECTION X

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Australian governments, federal and state, have channeled tens of millions of dollars into the National Action Plan and the Building Resilient Communities programs since 2005 till present. These funds have been overwhelmingly directed towards Muslim communities whether in the form of grants organisations apply for and conduct certain projects, or in the form of directly government-run initiatives.

“A total of **\$41.5 million** in Australian Government funding was allocated to the NAP’s development for five years from the financial years 2005-06 to 2009-10. In addition, as of 30 June 2008, State and Territory governments reported a combined total of **\$1,841,824**, as well as in-kind contributions, including to partnership projects with Department of Immigration and Citizenship.”²³⁷

The breakdown of a part of these funds from 2006-2009 from the 2007 mid-year Economic and Fiscal Outlook report tell of a targeted and comprehensive program where money is thrown at all sections of the Muslim community in order for the realisation of government objectives.

“The Government will provide \$4.4 million over four years (including \$88,000 in capital funding) to develop specialist training, education materials and forums aimed at assisting law enforcement agencies and Muslim communities resolve conflict and discrimination issues.

The Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission will also assist;

- Law enforcement agencies to respond to vilification and other discrimination issues;
- Communities to work effectively with law enforcement agencies in managing community issues;
- Muslim leaders to build understanding and acceptance of support services and complaints mechanisms; and
- Promotion of the rule of law among young Muslims and the appropriate ways of dealing with difference, conflict and grievance.

“The Government will provide \$2.9 million over four years (including \$38,000 in capital funding in 2006-07) to assist the Muslim community plan for and respond to national security issues and incidents, and emergencies. This measure will help the development of initiatives aimed at improving Muslim community awareness of national security arrangements and emergency response agencies.

“The Government will provide \$7.9 million over four years to establish a National Centre of Research and Educational Excellence in Islamic Studies within a major Australian university. This Centre is to play a leadership role in exploring the place of Islam in modern society.... The courses will provide many subjects relevant for those training to be Muslim religious leaders, providing an important vehicle for the teaching of Islam in an Australian context, applying the usual academic rigour of the Australian university system. The centre is designed to attract eminent, moderate Islamic scholars from around the world who will provide an authoritative community reference point.

“The Government will provide \$15.1 million over four years to continue the objectives of the national action plan for social cohesion, harmony and security. The funding will be provided for projects with state and territory governments and community organisations that help promote wider community engagement and participation by Muslims in social, sport, arts and other cultural and civic activities. It will also provide continued support for the Muslim Community Reference Group and fund further research into the causes of social disharmony within the Australian community.

“The Government will provide \$5.2 million over three years (including \$12,000 in capital funding in 2006-07) to conduct pilot programmes as part of the national action plan for social cohesion, harmony and security. The programmes will be conducted in Lakemba and Macquarie Fields in the first instance and will be evaluated in the third year. The programmes are:

²³⁷ Australian Government, Department of Immigration and Citizenship, *National Action Plan to Build on Social Cohesion, Harmony and Security - Final Evaluation Report* (September 2005 to June 2010), 2010, p. 8: <http://bit.ly/1c8ZaG6>

- *New Sporting Initiative for Disadvantaged Young Australians* (Australian Sports Commission);
- *Employment Initiatives for Disadvantaged Australians* (Department of Employment and Workplace Relations);
- *New Education Initiatives to Benefit Young Australians* (Department of Education, Science and Training); and
- *Mentors to Assist Disadvantaged Young Australians* (Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs).²³⁸

The Labor government continued the large funding of counter extremism programs.

“The Australian Government has invested approximately **\$4.2 million** in grants for community-driven projects aimed at building resilience to violent extremism and assisting individuals who are vulnerable to extremist influences. These programs focus on initiatives that take direct action against extremism while also recognising that there is not just one path to violent extremism.

These projects are designed to support a wide variety of activities, including:

- mentoring for youth vulnerable to extremist influences
- intercultural and interfaith education in schools
- peer support and team-building activities for at-risk individuals
- sports activities that promote understanding and inclusion
- materials to educate teachers
- skills and leadership training to improve social and economic opportunities, and
- online resources and activities to connect with international scholars”.²³⁹

“We are working with communities that can directly influence the vulnerability of at-risk individuals at a grassroots level, through the Youth Mentoring and Building Community Resilience grants programs as well as community engagement activities. These programs help to ensure communities have tools and information to challenge extremist ideologies and provide alternative ideologies for people in their communities who are at risk.”²⁴⁰

On 29th April 2013, the current Attorney-General, Mark Dreyfus, visited the Lebanese Muslim Association’s representatives, praising their work and announcing another round of grants in the Building Community Resilience program.

“Community organisations like the Lebanese Muslim Association are delivering extremely worthwhile projects for their community-like the leadership and educational activities they have delivered to empower young people to engage with and contribute positively to Australian society. We are proud to support such worthwhile projects through the Building Community Resilience grants program.

“The grants program focuses on early intervention and aims to support community-based projects across Australia which build resilience to radicalisation and violent extremism. The program has already provided more than **\$4.1 million** to support 50 diverse community-based projects across the country.

A new round of funding under the Building Community Resilience (BCR) grants program will be launched very soon. The 2013-14 funding round will focus on developing and expanding the work already being done by organisations in this space.”²⁴¹

In addition to the Australian federal and state government funding, monies from despotic regimes such as Saudi Arabia have also been graciously accepted with the full knowledge of the Australian government.

²³⁸ Safeguarding Aust. E-News. *Special Edition – Newly budgeted measures on homeland security, Safeguarding Aust. Summit*, 27 Dec 06: <http://bit.ly/1ax5VSN>

²³⁹ Australian Government, Attorney-General’s Department, *Current Activities*, Resilient Communities: <http://bit.ly/1c908IG>

²⁴⁰ Australian Government, Attorney-General’s Department, *Partners*, Resilient Communities: <http://bit.ly/1aptxYy>

²⁴¹ Australian Government, Attorney-General’s Department, *Community Leaders, Key To Building Community Resilience*, Resilient Communities, 21 May 2013: <http://bit.ly/Hp4Lxx>

“...the money that is coming supposedly to universities or otherwise, there is such a strong scrutiny, I myself know that for a fact, so when we started the Griffith Islamic Research Unit, all the money came from the local Muslim community, and the method was absolutely transparent, and when people from overseas wanted to say contribute, we had to make sure that they are absolutely reliable, it came through the right sources and through the right channels. And I know at the level of the Embassies, for example, with whom I’ve had much contact, they are absolutely careful that not one dollar comes into any organisation or into the pocket of any imam unless and until they know that the government is aware of the imam or the organisation. This is the overall picture, and what happens at certain individual levels I’m not sure, and yes, imams need to be careful not to become controlled. We have to always operate as independent individuals.”²⁴² Dr. Mohamad Abdalla, March 2007.

“GIRU also received funding worth \$50,000 from the Department of Multicultural Affairs Queensland (MAQ) to hold the Islamic Research Unit’s first international conference, The Challenges and Opportunities of Islam in the West: the Case of Australia which is being held from 3 to 5 March 2008. The keynote speaker of the conference will be Professor Tariq Ramadan, who was listed by Time magazine as one of today’s one hundred most influential people. This year MAQ also provided GIRU with funding of \$35,000 for a project on Islam and the Media. In recognition of GIRU’s important work in building bridges of understanding, the Embassy of Saudi Arabia recently donated \$100,000, which was gratefully received.”²⁴³ - The Owl’s Beak, Griffith University newsletter, 2007, page 24.

“...the most frequent visit that the previous Prime Minister ever made to my electorate was to a Saudi financed school in Auburn, the old Faisal College. He went there more than he went to the Olympic sites quite frankly, in my electorate”²⁴⁴

Counter Violent Extremism Funds

Muslim organisations are encouraged to apply for grants for counter-extremism projects. Since 2005, over \$8 million have been spent on such programs. Under the National Action Plan (NAP) \$4.1 million were used from 2005-2010 on about 56 community projects. Under the Building Community Resilience (BCR) program \$4.2 million have already been spent since 2011 till now on about 50 projects. Many of these projects are run by Muslim community organisations and the vast majority of them target Muslims.

The BCF grants are used explicitly to promote ‘Australia values’. A submission by the Attorney-General’s Department to the *Inquiry into Multiculturalism in Australia* in March 2012 noted,

“The grants programs seek to promote Australian values that are consistent with our multicultural policy. They do not promote an ideology of any kind, be it religious, political or otherwise. The grants provide support for projects across the areas of education, early intervention and support to challenge violent extremist ideologies.”²⁴⁵

The disclaimer here that no ideology is promoted is, of course, untrue. It takes ideological positions to challenge ideological positions. If not with a counter-ideology, with what is the Government challenging ‘violent extremist ideologies’?

Such an approach of funding community projects allows government to set the objectives and agenda whilst getting Muslims themselves to implement, thus gaining legitimacy for the agenda among Muslims. With all these grants and like government initiatives the idea originates from government, who also sets the objectives; community organisations merely implement within a framework already set.

All of this is clearly observed in information about the grants program provided by the Government. What

²⁴² Crittenden, S. *The Mufti of Australia?*, ABC’s The Religion Report, 28 Mar 2007: <http://ab.co/HkbclZ>

²⁴³ Griffith University. *The Owl’s Beak – Highlights of 2007*, Key Centre for Ethics, Law, Justice and Governance, 2007: <http://bit.ly/1im2izX>

²⁴⁴ Crittenden, S. *A new Muslim Community Reference Group?*, ABC’s The Religion Report, 26 Mar 2008: <http://ab.co/1aMLWMA>

²⁴⁵ Australian Government, Attorney-General’s Dept. *Submission no. 501 to the Inquiry into Multiculturalism in Australia*, March 2012, p. 6: <http://bit.ly/16Ouiaa>

follows is from the Building Community Resilience Grants Program Application Guidelines 2013-14²⁴⁶ and the FAQs about the grants programs on the Attorney-General's Department website²⁴⁷. All bold emphasis is ours.

As to the aims and objectives of the grants:

"The Building Community Resilience (BCR) grants program aims to support, encourage and empower Australian communities to resist the influence of violent extremism.

The BCR program **forms part of the Australian Government's Countering Violent Extremism Strategy**.

Under the program, grants are awarded to a range of local initiatives that:

- give communities the skills and resources to understand and **actively address intolerant or extremist messages** and discourage violent extremism
- support people who may be vulnerable to **extremist views** due to personal experiences of disengagement and marginalization; and/or
- educate groups and individuals about the avenues available to participate positively in political debate."

"The Australian, state and territory governments manage a number of programs designed to build social cohesion and cross-cultural harmony. The Building Community Resilience grants program is intended to complement, but not overlap with, these other initiatives. The goal of the program is to build community resilience to the specific issue of violent extremism."

"Violent extremism can be manifested in a number of different ways and can be based on different motivating factors. At present **the most prominent form of violent extremism globally is expressed by people who follow a militant interpretation of Islam**. However, grant applicants are encouraged to submit proposals that address violent extremism in all its forms, whether it is ideologically, politically or religiously inspired."

"Proposals must address one or more of the following issues:

- Violent extremism (as described in the 'Background' section of these Guidelines)
- Radicalisation (as described in the 'Background' section of these Guidelines), including online radicalisation through the influence of materials accessed via the internet, and/or
- Factors that may contribute to susceptibility to radicalisation, for example:
 - Subscribing to intolerant beliefs
 - Rejection of mainstream society
 - Disconnection from family, friends and the broader community
 - Exposure to criminality or violence, and/or
 - Exposure to extremist views."

Successful applicants enter into a legally binding funding agreement:

"Successful applicants will be required to enter into a legally-binding BCR Funding Agreement with the Australian Government. This Funding Agreement will set out the terms, conditions and arrangements under which the BCR grant funding is to be provided, received, managed and acquitted.

²⁴⁶ Attorney-General's Department, *Building Community Resilience Grants Program Application Guidelines 2013-14*, May 2013: <http://www.bulletpoint.com.au/building-community-resilience-grants-program/>

²⁴⁷ Australian Government, Attorney-General's Department, *FAQs about the Building Community Resilience Grants Program*: <http://bit.ly/1im5mMv>

Funding Agreements will clearly document the expectations of both parties regarding the delivery of the proposed project, including project deliverables, payment arrangements, reporting requirements and the return of unused funds.

Under the Funding Agreement, successful applicants will be responsible for managing the funded project within agreed timelines, and for monitoring, reporting and acquitting the BCR grant funding.”

The use of this funding is strictly subject to the aims and objectives set by the government through reporting and evaluation.

Payments of BCR grant funding will be **subject to achievement of project milestones and/or deliverables**, as demonstrated through progress and final reports to be provided to the Department.

Under the *Financial Management and Accountability Act 1997*, the Department is required to ensure that each grant that it administers is used for its intended purpose. A BCR grant recipient will therefore be **required to provide accurate, timely and adequate evidence** to demonstrate that its BCR grant funds have been expended in accordance with the grant recipient’s Funding Agreement. Funding Agreements will specify the grant recipient’s acquittal requirements and the acquittal timeframes.”

Given such requirements, we see that the aims and objectives of government are replicated, Orwellian language and all, in the stated objectives of projects organised by community organisation using BCR funding. The Lebanese Muslim Association’s *Sharing Humanity Leaders Program*²⁴⁸, for instance, which was funded by \$100,000 of BCR funding in 2011-12, was described in the following terms (bold emphasis ours).

“The project will work to build understanding and equip Muslims with the theological fundamentals that **counter extremist ideologies, dispel misconceptions and develop their role as citizens, leaders and positive role models so that they can become “leaders” for mainstream Islam and assert their Australian identity.**”

“The Objectives of the Activity are to:

- Develop educational resources that **promote interfaith/intercultural understanding** and provide individuals with the knowledge and skills to **challenge and debate radical ideologies**, especially in schools and higher education institutions.
- Develop programs that address issues of identity, sense of belonging and cultural isolation, which can be **factors leading to radicalisation**.
- Develop programs that **challenge radical messages and ideologies**, including those perpetuated online, and provide avenues for the non-violent expression of views and **encourage participation in our democratic society.**”

No effort is made to explain what the ‘extremist’ and ‘radical’ ideologies are that are being targeted. The eligibility criteria for the program also included the requirement that one “identify as an Australian Muslim.

What is instructive, on the whole, is the seamless transfer of the government’s agenda (and language) into that of community organisations. The same is observed in other projects undertaken by community organisation using BCR funding, such as the Australian Somali Community Association’s *Somali Community Resilience Project*, the Islamic Council of Queensland’s *Empowering Youth to Say No to Radicalisation* project, The Islamic Council of Victoria’s *The Community Reconnect Project*, The Islamic Society of South Australia’s *Defining Moderate Islam to Muslims and non-Muslims* project, the Lebanese Muslim Association’s *Positive Intellect Project*.

²⁴⁸ *Sharing Humanity Leaders Program*, The Lebanese Muslims Association, 2011: <http://bit.ly/1dzqmlc>

21 MARCH
HARMONY DAY

21 March is Harmony Day

The message of Harmony Day is Everyone Belongs. It is a day to celebrate Australia's diversity. It is a day of cultural respect for everyone who calls Australia home – from the traditional owners of this land to those who have come from many countries around the world.

There are many ways we can celebrate Harmony Day – through sport, dance, art, film, music, storytelling, cooking and sharing cultural meals. By participating in Harmony Day activities we can learn and understand how all Australians from diverse backgrounds equally belong to this nation and make it a better place.

Harmony Day is managed by the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) and coincides with the United Nations International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. Since 1989 Harmony Day has been widely celebrated across schools, childcare centres, community groups, churches, businesses and federal, state and local government agencies.

To encourage celebrations, DIAC provides free Harmony Day promotional material to those who register events on the website. There are also educational resources for teachers and students to celebrate Harmony Day in their schools.

Get involved:
Website: www.harmony.gov.au
Email: harmonyday@immg.gov.au
Phone: 1800 331 100

Around 7 million people have migrated to Australia since 1945

We identify with approximately 100 ancestries

45% of Australians are either born overseas or have a parent who was

Harmony Day has been celebrated with **60 600** EVENTS since it began in 2008

EVERYONE BELONGS
www.harmony.gov.au

SECTION XI

COMMUNITY LIAISON

The disproportionate targeting of the Muslim community has become purposeful over the years, as evident in the ever increasing ‘engagement’ of the authorities- as varied as the Australian Federal Police (AFP), the Australian Security and Intelligence Organisation (ASIO), the Department of Immigration, the Attorney-General’s Department, the Human Rights Commission (HRC), the Community Relations Commission (CRC) and other state, federal and local authorities- with the community. This ‘engagement’ is manifest in the form of community liaison groups, national action plans, building resilience projects and like community engagement strategies. In addition to community leaders and imams, youth are a key focus of liaison efforts.

What is made public of these activities are the public events such as government-sponsored dinners, functions, sporting and cultural events, and targeted programs. Beyond these publicised activities are many more private meetings and correspondences between the authorities and community representatives.

The objectives of such engagement are stated in the policies of the 2005-2010 National Action Plan and the Building Resilient Communities program which has run from 2011-present.

“NAP initiatives will...promote and build closer collaboration, liaison, information-sharing and trust between governments and communities and encourage increased participation in mainstream Australia by those communities currently feeling disengaged or marginalised.

“The isolation, alienation and marginalisation of some young Australians in our society will be addressed through a strategy of positive engagement and liaison, between governments, communities and individuals.

Action under the NAP could:

- encourage more active participation in mainstream sporting, social and cultural activities to lessen feelings of isolation and marginalisation in some communities
- encourage current and emerging community leaders, particularly women and young people, to participate more widely in community activities, including holding positions of responsibility within statutory bodies and representing their community at various fora
- inform community leaders about existing government mechanisms and available social services to encourage them to assist their communities in accessing and using existing support services
- provide mentoring and volunteering opportunities to young people, in order to build their leadership and representational skills.”²⁴⁹

“Engagement activities already under way range from informal meetings between the Government and community leaders through to more formal activities. At community engagement forums community members meet with government officials to raise issues of concern on behalf of their community, provide feedback on government policy around countering violent extremism and talk about their contribution to developing grassroots solutions.”²⁵⁰ – Resilient Communities website

“Effective community engagement is a key component of the Government’s approach. Communities have an important role in identifying and diverting vulnerable individuals before they come to the attention of security and law enforcement agencies. In order to support them in this role, the Government has commenced a series of regular meetings with community leaders around the country from a range of religious, ethnic and cultural backgrounds to listen and engage on these issues.”²⁵¹ – Robert McClelland, Attorney-General, March 2011.

²⁴⁹ Australian Government, Department of Immigration, *A National Action Plan to Build on Social Cohesion, Harmony and Security, 2005*: <http://bit.ly/1gy8oz7>

²⁵⁰ Australian Government, Attorney-General’s Department, *Current Activities, Resilient Communities*: <http://bit.ly/1c908IG>

²⁵¹ McClelland, R. *Address to the NSC Senior Executive Development Course Dinner, Old Parliament House Canberra, 10 Mar 2011*: <http://bit.ly/1ax3Whh>

The purpose of this engagement is to assist the government agenda by:

- Getting Muslims to implement it, thereby affording it legitimacy in the community;
- Containing resistance towards it by selling it in positive terms and trying to show openness to feedback and criticism and a willingness to interact and listen;
- Facilitating integration by promoting Muslim involvement into mainstream systems, along the lines outlined in section V of chapter three.

The state and federal police have been heavily involved in the engagement strategy, demonstrating that the Muslim community is being dealt with as a security risk.

“Only the other week, I caught up with some colleagues from a State police force. I heard about their plans to engage with schools and address extremism through education.

“The Australian Federal Police (AFP) is also working to build positive, trusting and cohesive relationships with the community. Through the National Community Engagement Strategy the AFP maintain community liaison teams in Melbourne and Sydney and engage with communities there and in other key locations through activities such as Harmony Day celebrations, sporting activities and presentations to schools.”²⁵²
–Robert McClelland, Attorney-General, July 2009

The Australian Federal Police in particular has been used extensively for this purpose. AFP community engagement teams- which have gone from being called ‘Islamic engagement teams’²⁵³ and ‘Islamic liaison teams’²⁵⁴ to ‘Community Engagement teams’ and finally to ‘Community Liaison teams’ – have been at work since early 2008.

“AFP Community Liaison Teams (CLT) have been established to help build positive, trusting and cohesive relationships with the community. Over time it is hoped this will help groups to increase their resilience to extremist behaviours, and create greater levels of social cohesion, resulting in the reduced likelihood of vulnerable individuals becoming radicalised. The CLTs are guided by the National Community Engagement Strategy.

National Community Engagement Strategy (NCES) objectives are to:

- build trust and foster cooperation between the AFP, partner agencies and communities identified at risk
- develop information sharing with other relevant organisations, leading to enhanced communication and decision making processes
- provide support to AFP investigations through increased awareness of cultural, ethnic, religious and language programs
- provide alternative narratives to extremist rhetoric
- develop performance measures which identify gaps in community engagement, and provide solutions to remedy those gaps.”²⁵⁵

“The AFP contributes to the National Community Engagement Strategy, which aims to undermine extremist ideology and increase community resilience. This is being done in conjunction with commonwealth, state and territory partners, and through positive community engagement by the AFP’s Community Liaison Teams.”²⁵⁶ Brendan O’Connor, Minister for Home Affairs, June 2010

²⁵² McClelland, R. *Speech To The Australian Strategic Policy Institute, Canberra*, 21 Jul 2009: <http://bit.ly/17kiu5e>

²⁵³ Senate Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs, Australian Federal Police, Question No. 79: <http://bit.ly/18RBLFh>

²⁵⁴ *Building a relationship with Melbourne’s Islamic Community*, Platypus Magazine, Edition 97, Dec 2007, p. 28: <http://bit.ly/170hygT>

²⁵⁵ *Community engagement*, Australian Federal Police: <http://www.afp.gov.au/what-we-do/community-engagement.aspx>

²⁵⁶ Keenan, M. *House Of Representatives Proof - Ministerial Statements: AFP Speech*, Parliamentary Debates, 16 Jun 2010: <http://www.afpa.org.au/get/800.pdf>

This type of ‘engagement’ manifests in the likes of Ramadan events which the AFP has hosted, surprisingly, for the last seven years.²⁵⁷ This year’s Eid al-Fitr dinners in Sydney and Melbourne were held in August, with the theme of ‘taking initiative’ and gave AFP Commissioner Tony Negus an opportunity to showcase other AFP ‘engagement’ activities with the communities.

“The theme of this year’s Eid dinners was ‘Taking Initiative’. The Commissioner took the opportunity to share some of the recent activities run by the AFP Community Liaison teams such as an event celebrating International Women’s Day, an AFP Youth Forum, engagement with the Council of Imams, and community information sessions to discuss law enforcement work to promote ongoing dialogue.”²⁵⁸

Noticeable, here, is the peculiar reality of police being used for ostensibly political purposes such as to “provide alternative narratives to extremist rhetoric” and to “undermine extremist ideology”, something that demonstrates well the government tying issues of terrorism, identity, values and integration. The result is a political agenda pushing ideological (secular liberal) positions onto the Muslim community under the guise of enhancing “social cohesion” and national security.

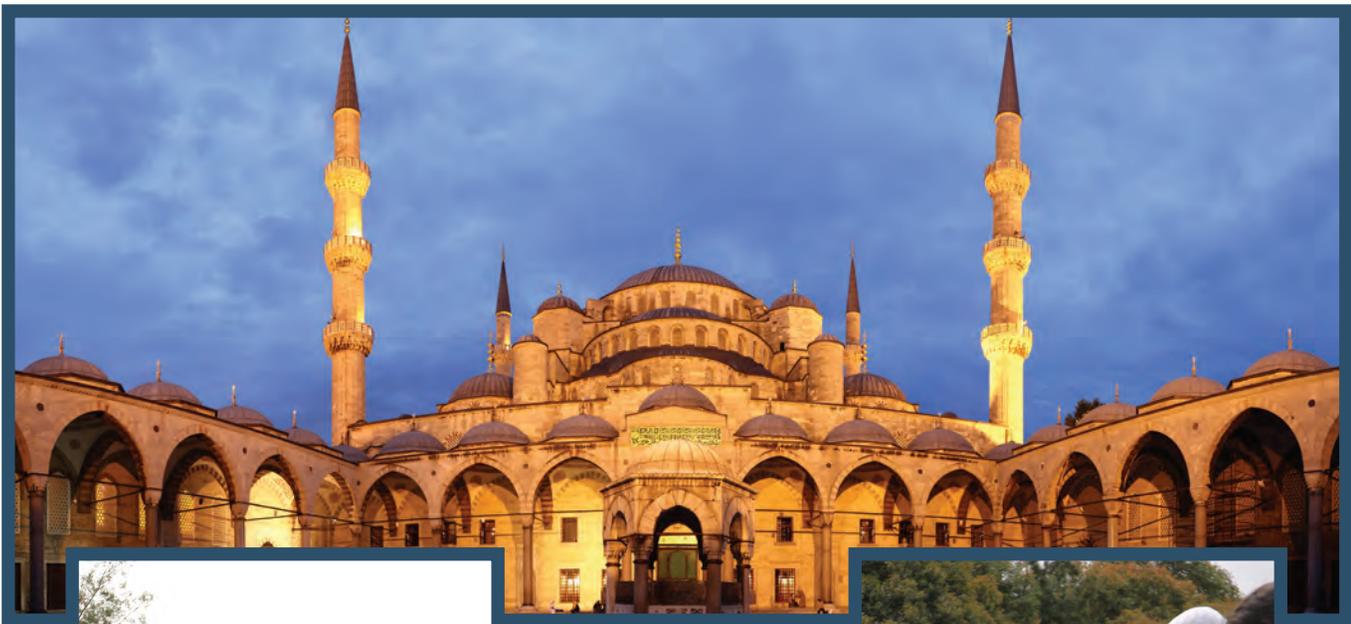
Typically, this engagement seeks to present selective evidence to prove the government narrative, while seeking to avoid the tough questions and controversial areas such as foreign policy. Those behind the controversial aspects of the design and implementation of counter-terrorism policy – policymakers and intelligence officials- are not part of the ‘engagement’ that seeks to placate Muslims. Instead, police and bureaucrats are used to sell the policy.

Exploiting and oppressing others only to blame them for the ensuing consequences, then being so nice as to offer programs to assist the victims accept responsibility and solve the problem is the old colonial modus operandi of dealing with colonised populations. Counter-terrorism policy is one of the many examples of its modern guise used by governments in western liberal democracies to deal with ‘minorities’, Muslims in particular.

Muslims should disengage from such phony engagement, because participation affords life and legitimacy to such programs. A lack of participation, and indeed vocal criticism of them, would see them quickly fail.

²⁵⁷ AFP host dinners to celebrate Eid ul-Fitr – Media release, Australian Federal Police, 28 Aug 2012: <http://bit.ly/SReKgZ>

²⁵⁸ Australian Government, Attorney-General’s Department, *Celebrating The End Of Ramadan*, Resilient Communities, 8 Oct 2013: <http://bit.ly/Has3Hy>



CHAPTER 4

RECOMMENDATIONS & THE BATTLE AHEAD

This report establishes beyond doubt that the Australian Government targets the Muslim community under the guise of counter-terrorism policy, seeking to mould the community in the way it wants – a way that is unacceptable for Muslims from the position of Islam. With counter-terrorism policy now, and for the foreseeable future, a permanent feature of government policy, this is likely to continue, if not intensify. We can expect more of what we have seen in the last few years:

- A brutally exploitative foreign policy towards the Muslim world, the blame for the consequences of which is placed on Muslims, as western state violence is backgrounded and justified whilst violence by Muslim individuals, paling in comparison, is foregrounded and characterised as an existential threat.
- Demonisation of those aspects of Islam not in accordance with secular liberal values in the media and public discourse and positive portrayal of those aspects that do.
- Use of the draconian anti-terror laws to make examples of Muslims deemed ‘radical’ used as an intimidatory tactic.
- Surveillance of mosques, community centres and Muslim activists as well as underhanded intelligence-gathering tactics by intelligence agencies such as entrapment.
- Sustained attempts to integrate Muslims by impressing on them fundamental secular liberal values whilst allowing cultural and personal religious differences.
- Promotion of ‘moderate Islam’ and ‘Islam in an Australia context’ – a secular, localised and politically-impotent state-sanctioned version of Islam.
- Polarisation of the community into ‘moderates’ and ‘extremists’ with the former being co-opting to assist the government in countering the latter.
- Purposeful targeting of Imams and other community leaders to keep them in line with the government agenda for the Muslim community.
- Purposeful targeting of Muslim youth, through schools, universities and community sports and cultural activities, in an attempt to mould a new generation of ‘Australia Muslims’ who practice ‘moderate Islam’.
- Provision of grants for community organisations to ‘counter violent-extremism’ through leadership programs, workshops, sports and cultural activities.
- ‘Engagement’ with the community by police and bureaucrats to sell the government’s policy, and justify it, and the recruitment and use of Muslims for this purpose.

This presents for the Muslim community a number of challenges it is critical for her to think deeply about and formulate effective responses to. In this respect we present the following ten recommendations for the community’s serious consideration, discussion and scrutiny. They do not represent detailed prescriptions nor are presented here as a final definitive word. Rather they represent the articulation of broad steps we believe represent the best way forward for the community and are presented here to serve as a basis for discussion and thinking about what the best way forward for the community is.

Recommendation one

Understanding and exposing the counter-terrorism policy of the Government for what it is, challenging and critiquing it, in a sustained and coherent manner, along with the flawed narrative that underpins it, and propagating a counter-narrative reflective of the truth.

It is imperative that the Government’s counter-terrorism policy be exposed for what it is: an agenda which takes terrorism as a pretext to pursue the ideological, political and economic interests of the state, and in the process interferes in the Muslim community in the most insidious of ways. The flaws in the policy and the narrative it is based on that reveal this need to be openly critiqued and challenged. We need to

emphasise that western foreign policy is the primary cause of terrorism and that, in turn, the Government, not the Muslim community, is responsible for terrorism and has the onus to deal with the problem.

Our counter-narrative needs to present matters as they are, not as they have been falsely characterised. We see that the focus in the West, in the context of terrorism and violence, is Muslim violence. We should question why, instead of accepting this as a given, which we implicitly do when our discourse centres on Muslim violence, its causes and antidotes, and we start debating whether it is 'extremist' ideology or political factors such as foreign policy or something else.

Political factors should figure not merely as one of the factors which lead to Muslim violence, but as the core problem. For if it is violence that is the problem that confronts us then surely everyone sees that western violence perpetrated by states is *far worse than any violence Muslims perpetrate*.

Hence, we must seek to flip the discourse on its head, from one that assumes Muslim violence to be the core problem, the causes and solutions for which are debated, and in which western violence only figures as one of the possible causal factors to one where western violence is the core problem, the causes and solutions for which are debated, and in which Muslim violence figures as one of the effects and hence also needs to be addressed.

Our action, in community initiatives, programs and engagement with mainstream media, should be in line with this narrative. The other approach of simply going along with the government agenda- condemning, apologising for, and distancing from wrong actions perpetrated by Muslims- on the basis that what some Muslims are doing is wrong and against Islam is simplistic, naive and ignores the bigger picture. In doing so it merely scapegoats powerless individuals for the problems caused by the powerful institutions of society such as government and media.

Recommendation two

Adopting an independent agenda instead of falling in line with the government agenda.

Government has set its agenda based on what it has determined of priorities, objectives and methods. Our merely responding to this by going along with it, rejecting or even taking some middle path between acceptance and rejection is reactionary and inadequate. We need to set our own agenda based on what we determine of priorities, objectives and methods.

We must not be naive in accepting the priorities, agendas, methods and objectives set by government as a given. It is they, for instance, who have imposed 'terrorism' and 'counter-terrorism' as a priority. We should not take this for granted. Our priorities should be elsewhere: living Islam as individuals, groups, organisations and a community; taking Islam to the wider society; strengthening and maintaining the Islam of our children; and the like. We have a revelation and responsibility from Allah, the Exalted, upon which our priorities and agenda should be based.

Recommendation three

Emphasising and appreciating that government alienates Muslim youth first by its foreign and domestic policies generally and then further by its counter-terrorism policies specifically.

The effect of government policy on Muslim youth needs to be both appreciated and emphasised.

Emphasising it is to set the record straight. Foreign and domestic policies, such as military invasion of Muslim countries and demonisation of Islam at home, alienate the youth in the first instance. This alienation is then exacerbated when the youth themselves are blamed for the problem and specific policies, such as draconian laws, surveillance, spying and underhanded intelligence tactics, are implemented to target them. This approach is calling, nay begging, for reactions. If any of these reactions turn out in violence or attacks on Australian soil, government alone, not the Muslim community, will be to blame.

Appreciating it is to do justice with the youth. The community needs to listen to them, deal with their issues and concerns and stand by their side, even when they do something wrong- not by justifying the wrong act but by placing it in its proper context and affording them the legal and social rights afforded to all. Negating them these rights because of social or political pressure is not acceptable.

Recommendation four

Refusing to partake in any of the Government's counter-terrorism programs and initiatives which serve their agenda and perpetuate their narrative about terrorism.

This is imperative, for two reasons.

One, what the Government is doing is wrong and includes attacks on Islam. Thus, our participation with them entails participation in wrong. Two, participation in the Government's counter-terrorism programs and initiatives legitimises its agenda and does not allow for a genuine exposition and critique thereof. One cannot seriously and genuinely critique and challenge something they themselves are a part of.

We must appreciate here that remaining silent on government excesses is one thing. Actively participating, on the other hand, in its programs is another level of wrong altogether.

It should be noted that this recommendation is specific to counter-terrorism policy and other areas where Islam is targeted. It does not mean cutting all relations from government. Rather, we need to distinguish, in terms of dealing with government, between securing our rights as citizens and advancing our interests as Muslims. This means distinguishing between government as the political authority dealing with Muslims in their capacity as citizens and government as an anti-Islam actor dealing with Muslims in their capacity as Muslims.

Recommendation five

Establishing and maintaining the independence of community institutions, such as mosques, centres, organisations and Imams' bodies, from government control or influence.

Government influence over community institutions facilitates penetration of the government agenda into the community. Thus the community must do its level best to maintain independence to the extent possible.

It is important to appreciate here how state power functions. Although states uses 'hard' power measures such as force of law, a larger degree of influence is gained through 'soft' power measures. These include such things as affording legitimacy to those beliefs, actions and people that are deemed favourable and seeking to de-legitimise those which are deemed problematic. Funding is used to attract people towards where the government wants people to move, as is the moulding of opinion through narratives or counter-

narratives and co-opting of media.

Governments are not neutral nor are like any other individual or group. The opinions and positions of government should not be seen as just another opinion amongst multiple opinions. Governments have behind them the power of the institutions of state, making them vastly more influential. Hence there is a need to be extra vigilant.

This vigilance is all the more required by Imams, whom we know the Government seeks to target and use because of their good standing in the community as leaders and guides. We should keep in mind here the Islamic position on scholars mixing with rulers. Classical scholars were extremely wary of being influenced by the rulers, due to the seriousness of the matter noted in many ahadith. This was, of course, with legitimate Muslim rulers and *khulafa'*. What, then, should be the case with disbelieving secular liberal rulers?

Recommendation six

Giving utmost attention to the purity and clarity of Islamic values, in contradistinction to secular liberal values; their being known and taught in the community, and instilled in the youth in particular.

It is noted that a large part of the government agenda with respect to Islam and Muslims is ideological. It focuses on ideas. This is because ideas and beliefs are of utmost importance as people act on the basis of their conceptions of life and the world.

There is an overt effort to detach fundamental Islamic ideas from Muslims. On the one hand key non-Islamic ideas such as secularism and liberal freedoms are promoted as being Islamic and impressed on Muslims. These need to be challenged. On the other hand, key Islamic ideas such as *khilafah*, *shariah* and *jihad* are targeted and attacked as aberrations of Islam. These need to be affirmed in their correct conception.

We see a concerted effort by government to change Islam from what it is – a complete way of life with its own worldview, including an ideological and political outlook distinct from that of western secular liberalism – to one that leaves off those aspects which conflict with secular liberalism. A secularised Islam which informs the theology and morals of Muslims but not their politics and ideology more broadly. This state-sanctioned version of Islam is promoted as 'moderate Islam' and 'Australian Islam' and 'contextualising Islam' is the cover used to justify it.

It is imperative for the community to separate truth from falsehood and Islamic and non-Islamic. We must adopt and promote Islam as a coherent whole and reject and critique secular liberalism as a coherent whole. Part of this includes clarity of language used to describe the twain, as clarity of concepts is predicated on clarity of language.

Recommendation seven

Adopt more thought-out, confident and assertive approaches towards various aspects of state interaction with Muslims, such as those of ASIO and the AFP.

Imposition of certain programs and operations by authorities takes advantage of those who assume defensive and insular stances. We need to be open and assertive generally but all the more so when we are being mistreated.

With ASIO this means throwing off the cover of secrecy under which it operates inside the community and gets away with all sorts of illegal practices. This can be done by publicising interaction with ASIO, openly discussing the issue within the community and wider society, publicising the stories of those youth and activists who have been harassed by ASIO, entrapped or dealt with unfairly in other ways. ASIO relies on everything being kept covert, a practice which itself intended to intimidate. This needs to be countered.

With the AFP this means engaging on our terms, not theirs. We should be willing to assist in police investigations, to the extent required, but beyond this we are not in need of being 'engaged' by the police. The Muslim community should not be dealt with on the basis of being a 'national security' risk.

Recommendation eight

Re-defining positive and negative media portrayal of Islam and Muslims and actively engaging mainstream media to counter negative and propagate positive portrayals.

Media demonisation of Islam and Muslims is a major problem. It is a reality to be expected given that the media is an institution of state, a secular liberal state in our case. Nevertheless, we must play our role in effecting what change we can by engaging the media, on our terms. Part of this is to first correctly define what a positive and negative portrayal of Islam is. Otherwise we will be seeking and acknowledging coverage not worthy of the same.

A positive portrayal is not anything that has something nice to say about Islam or Muslims, or something that shows Muslims are just like other people. Certain aspects of Islam are given apparently positive portrayals because they are deemed to aspects in line with secular liberalism and thus part of the 'moderate Islam' deemed worthy of acceptance by mainstream opinion.

Rather, a positive portrayal is that which gives a fair hearing to those aspects of Islam which do not accord with the secular liberal ideals. Conversely, a negative portrayal is that which demonises these aspects of Islam or attempts to secularise or normalise Islam within the ideological parameters of the state and society.

Recommendation nine

Strengthening ties within the community through sincere engagement on differences of opinion and dealing with our issues internally without recourse to government or media.

It is well-known to the community that it comprises of Muslim individuals, groups and organisations of varying orientation and opinion. Nevertheless, what binds us as a community is Islam and hence what is common amongst us is stronger and more fundamental than what is differed on. This commonality should be emphasised and differences should be engaged sincerely, warmly and openly through serious debate and discussion, mutual advice and critique.

This is the requirement of Islam but is all the more important given that in our present context government seeks to polarise the community and use some Muslims against others. It is imperative here to not allow government to interfere in the internal affairs of the community under the pretext of combating terrorism. We must reject the imposed labels of 'moderates' and 'extremists' and reject being used against other Muslims as tools in the government agenda.

The Government is not a charitable, ideologically-neutral, father-like figure looking to benevolently assist people. Rather it is a capitalist, ideological (secular liberal), powerful institution with specific economic and political interests which guide its policy. Its interests do not align with those of the Muslim community, a community defined by Islam.

Thus, any problems the community faces – and we do face problems – where interests are not aligned with government must be dealt with internally and independently. Here, too, both the identification of problems and prescription of solutions is to be done on the basis of Islam and our assessments, not government-impressed standards.

Recommendation ten

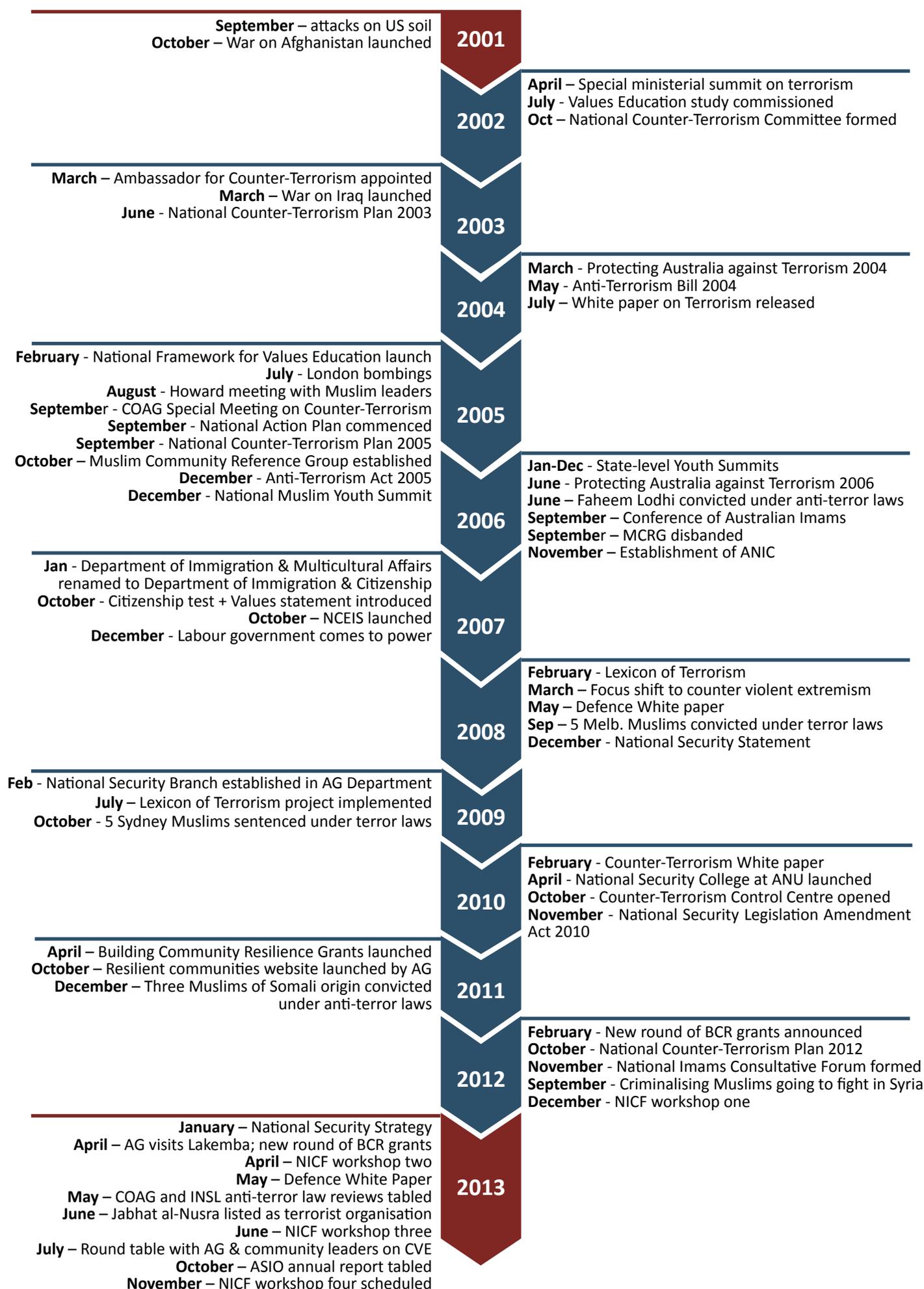
Acknowledging that the fate, success and failure of the Muslim community in Australia is tied, inextricably, to the fate of the *ummah* in the Muslim world.

We must keep the bigger picture in mind. The increased scrutiny of Islam and Muslims in the West is a result of the struggle for Islam in the Muslim world. That struggle is reflected here. So long as the situation in the Muslim world is a shambles, Muslim ‘minorities’ in the West will remain at the mercy of western governments for they are a severed body part of a stateless nation with no one to represent them or adopt their interests on the global stage. This has a number of implications.

One, we must ascribe utmost importance to the struggle for Islam in the Muslim world and contribute from here to the work there for the re-establishment of Islam and the *Khilafah*. Two, we cannot see ourselves as a small minority alone in a foreign society. Rather, we are part of a large and powerful *ummah* with immense potential that begs to be realised. Three, our local struggles here should not be disconnected from our global struggle in the Muslim world.

Until the *Khilafah* is established, we can expect, being realistic and understanding the nature of society and change, that our situation here will not improve in any dramatic way. However, we are the servants of a gracious Lord, who compensates on efforts, not on results. What matters most is that we do our best in fulfilling our obligations to Allah, the Exalted, and His Messenger, upon whom be peace. If we forsake or neglect these in pursuit of short-term material gains, we would have exchanged a great commerce with Allah for a cheaply one in this world.

Appendix I: Timeline of policy development and evolution



Appendix II: Outline of policy development and evolution

Following the attacks on the World Trade Centre and the Pentagon in September 2001, there was a renewed focus on counter-terrorism policy in Australia.

Notably, the first response was military as Australia sent troops to partake in the invasions of Afghanistan and then Iraq, as an ally of the US in its War on Terror.

In April 2002 a special ministerial summit on terrorism took place resulting in the formation of the National Counter-Terrorism Committee (NCTC) five months later in October. The NCTC is co-chaired by senior federal and state government officials and comprises senior representation from relevant government and law enforcement agencies from each jurisdiction. It was established to provide strategic and policy advice to heads of government and ministers; coordinate nation-wide counter-terrorism capability; and facilitate information and intelligence sharing between all jurisdictions.

It also produces the primary public document on Australia's national counter-terrorism policy and arrangements- the National Counter-Terrorism Plan (NCTP). The NCTP outlines responsibilities, authorities and the mechanisms to prevent and manage acts of terrorism within Australia and sets out Australia's strategic approach to preventing and dealing with acts of terrorism in the country. It is updated as required and reviewed by the NCTC at least every three years.

The first NCTP was issued in June 2003, and since then has been updated twice: 2005 and 2012.

The National Counter-Terrorism Committee along with the National Security Committee (NSC)- a Cabinet committee and the peak ministerial decision-making body on national security matters- form the basis for a 'whole of government' approach to national security.

The Government's first White Paper on Terrorism- Transnational Terrorism: The Threat to Australia- was issued in July 2004. This paper concluded that Australia's security environment had changed by now facing the new threat of 'extremist-Muslim terrorism' whose driver was 'extremist ideology'. It argued that Australia faced a direct threat and, completely ignoring the root causes of terrorism, claimed that it is a target not because of what it does but because of its values.

Complementing the white paper, which examined the international dimensions of the terrorist threat, the Government released another publication, Protecting Australia Against Terrorism, which set out the key elements of Australia's national counter-terrorism policy and arrangements, in March 2004. This publication, issued by the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, was updated once in July 2006.

The two years after the attacks in the US also saw changes made to Australia's anti-terrorism legislation with various regulatory and legislative amendments made to the thirty federal acts of legislation, existent prior to 2001, under which terrorist acts could be handled, leading up to the first new legislation in the form of the Anti-Terrorism Bill 2004.

This new bill, along with two subsequent amendments in the same year, provided for an extension of the fixed investigation period and allowed the suspension or delay of questioning of a suspect, allowed government to proscribe organisations as terrorist and made it an offence to be a member of, associate with, providing training to or receiving training from, any such proscribed organisation. It also gave the AFP

and ASIO the power to request an order for the surrender of passports.

This was followed, in 2005, with even more draconian legislation with the Anti-Terrorism Act 2005, which provided for control orders, preventative detention and stop, question and search powers, outlawed reckless funding of a potential terrorist, expanded ASIO powers and introduced new 'sedition' laws.

These two pieces of legislation were passed under the Howard Coalition Government, but with support from Labor.

These legislative, law-enforcement, intelligence and military 'hard-power' measures formed the focus of the policy response, in line with the approach taken at the time in the US and UK.

Soft-power measures seeking to counter 'radical ideology' and integrate Muslims were also present but attracted less policy focus at the start, increasing with time.

A key feature in this area was the imposition of 'Australian values', through schools, tertiary institutes, community leadership and imams.

Brendan Nelson, then Minister for Education commissioned a 'values education' study in July 2002, which resulted in the National Framework for Values Education, launched in 2004. Its aim was to place 'Australian values' much more prominently in education policy. \$31 billion of federal education funding was made available to schools tied, importantly, to the implementation of the new framework.

Brendan Nelson re-launched the National Framework for Values Education following the London bombings in 2005, outlining the values he felt all Australian children should learn, linking these 'Australian' values explicitly to the Anzac narrative of Simpson and his donkey. He subsequently warned Islamic schools that they must teach Australian values.

Following the London bombings of July 2005, policy attention turned to the issue of 'home-grown' terrorism, resulting in a greater focus on countering extremism at home and integrating Muslims.

In the very next month after the bombings Prime Minister John Howard summoned a group of hand-picked Muslim leaders to discuss the issue of terrorism. This 'Muslim leaders summit' took place on 23 August 2005. In this meeting Muslim leaders were basically asked to assume responsibility for the 'radicals' amongst them and work with Government to counter them and their 'radical' Islamic ideology. This was followed by the National Muslim Youth Summit held in Sydney in December and similar state-level youth summits throughout the following year.

As a result of the Muslim leaders summit the Muslim Community Reference Group (MCRG) was established in September 2005. The reference group comprised 14 Muslim community representatives who met over a 12 month period from September 2005 to September 2006. Its purpose was to advise the government on strategies that aimed to "tackle radicalisation among young Australian Muslims by harnessing support from moderate sections of our Muslim communities."

In the same month, COAG held a Special Meeting on Counter-Terrorism which encouraged inter-faith dialogue and requested the Ministerial Council on Immigration and Multicultural Affairs (MCIMA) to develop

a national action plan building on the principles agreed to at the Prime Minister's August meeting with Muslim community leaders and like state-level meetings.

This saw the beginning of the National Action Plan to Build on Social Cohesion, Harmony and Security (NAP) which commenced in September 2005 and ran through to June 2010 as a 'whole of government' initiative to reinforce social cohesion by addressing extremism. It was part of national security policy and specifically targeted Muslims.

The program received \$41.5 million over the five years of its operation. The then Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs, fulfilled the role of the NAP coordinating agency, receiving \$3 million annually for this task, \$500,000 of which was for community grants to enhance the 'resilience' of Muslim communities. This was undertaken through community integration activities such as sports and arts activities and youth and leader mentoring programs.

In January 2007 the Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs was renamed the Department of Immigration and Citizenship and unprecedented changes to citizenship were made in 2007 reflecting a shift away from the traditional approach to multiculturalism towards one that emphasises integration of migrants. The residence requirement was increased from two to four years.

In October that year a new citizenship test, modelled on the test in the UK adopted in 2005, was introduced. A new values statement, which applicants for permanent and long-term temporary visas must sign, was also adopted. The statement obligates migrants to respect certain listed Australian values such as freedom and dignity of the individual, freedom of religion, commitment to the rule of law, parliamentary democracy, and equality of men and women; to understand that they will be entering into a shared identity and common bond with all Australians; and pledge loyalty to "Australia and its people".

The National Centre of Excellence for Islamic Studies (NCEIS) was also established in 2007 with \$8m of funding from the Howard Government, with the stated aim of the centre was to produce home-grown Imams and Muslim leaders well versed in this 'moderate' version of Islam. It was a major development in the efforts of the Australian Government to promote a state-sanctioned version of Islam. The centre was modelled on the Centre for Muslim-Christian Understanding at Georgetown University in Washington as a think-tank on Islamic issues advising the government and facilitating Muslim integration.

The Rudd Labor Government came to office in November 2007. With respect to counter-terrorism policy, no substantive changes were made. Everything carried on with minor adaptations of form. Where the Howard Government was bold and forthright, arrogant perhaps, in the articulation of its policy, the Rudd Government operated relatively more quietly. The policy on the ground, however, was essentially the same. The NAP continued as before; the initiatives involving civil society, government departments, the police and Muslim communities finding support from the new government. The Anti-Terror laws also remained untouched, with little more the cosmetic changes being made. The approach of using 'preventative' counter-extremism measures along with the usual security measures was also the same.

There was a move away from the MCRG model, although this began towards the end of the Howard government era already given the controversies with the MCRG in terms of its representativeness and real authority in the Muslim community. The Rudd government gave preference to a more informal, decentralised approach, rather than using a single umbrella organisation. It also seemed to prefer using a religious leadership, like ANIC, with a better standing in the Muslim community than the likes of the MCRG. The Rudd government did, however, seek to develop a more coherent approach to counter-extremism,

noting the lack of emphasis on community building in counter-terrorism policy. It went about implementing the advice of the Smith Review of Homeland and Border Security, tabled in June 2008, which noted the importance of the federal and state governments working closely together on counter-radicalisation programs.

In September 2008, Attorney General Robert McClelland emphasised that the most fundamental goal of counter terrorism responses should be prevention, instructing his department to develop strategies for countering extremism using the approach adopted in the UK as a model.

In the same year there was a deliberate change in the language used on terrorism, in line with similar changes in the US and UK. The Attorney-General announced the commencement of a national project to examine the use of language on national security issues. The 'Lexicon of Terrorism' project was led by Victoria Police, in partnership with the Victorian Department of Premier and Cabinet, the Australian Multicultural Foundation, and the Attorney-General's Department and resulting in the publication of A Lexicon of Terror in 2009.

The new approach was to use language such as 'violent extremism', 'extremist ideology' and 'counter-terrorism' instead of 'Islamist extremism' or 'Islamic terrorism'. The phrase 'war on terror' was also dropped. The idea here was to avoid glorifying terrorism or suggesting a clash between cultures or religions and instead to depict terrorism as base criminal conduct. The rubric of 'violent extremism' and 'counter-violent extremism' became the norm from this point on.

The first Australian National Security Statement was issued in December 2008 by Kevin Rudd. It emphasised, "broader strategies to enhance social cohesion and resilience and lessen the appeal of radical ideology" as well as an expansion of the national security strategy to an 'all-hazards' approach, such that it would include pandemics, economic shocks, climate change and the like, that is, man-made and natural events, not just 'traditional terrorism'.

The following year, 2009, saw a new National Security Branch (NSB) established in the Federal Attorney General's Department. Originally with the task to identify and respond to gaps in domestic security policy, in 2010 it took over the portfolio of the counter-extremism social cohesion work from the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC). DIAC's work had a greater focus on community integration under the NAP. This continued under the NSB but with an added focus on community 'resilience' through countering 'extremist' messages.

2009 also saw the establishment of the National Security College at the Australian National University in Canberra as well as the release of the Defence White Paper by Prime Minister Kevin Rudd and Minister for Defence Joel Fitzgibbon.

In sum, from 2009 onwards the national security agenda was coordinated nation-wide through the Attorney-General's Department and with a renewed focus on 'counter violent extremism' (CVE). The key areas of focus of the CVE strategy, as noted by the Attorney-General in July 2009, were identifying and disrupting violent extremists; identifying at-risk groups and individuals and supporting them to resist violent extremism; maintaining the social cohesion and resilience of communities; and using effective communications to challenge violent extremist messages and support alternatives.

CVE was further emphasised in the Government's Counter-Terrorism White Paper released in February 2010 by Kevin Rudd six years after the last white paper. On releasing the white paper he highlighted that the threat of terrorism was not diminishing and had in fact become a permanent feature of Australia's security environment, with an increased threat from people born or raised in Australia.

The white paper emphasised the 'home-grown' threat and the importance of developing a coordinated, national approach to addressing violent extremism. A new CVE Unit, subsequently established in the National Security Branch of the Attorney-General's Department, thereafter developed the updated CVE strategy entitled A National Approach to Countering Violent Extremism in Australia: the CVE Strategic Plan. This was a classified document, a summary of which was released publically.

It also re-cast the four major elements of counter-terrorism strategy, as identified in the previous terrorism white paper (2004), from prevention, preparedness, response and recovery to analysis, protection, response and resilience; the latter being the major change. The stated vision of counter violent extremism, which came under 'resilience', was to "reduce the risk of home-grown terrorism by strengthening Australia's resilience to radicalisation and assisting individuals to disengage from violent extremist influences and beliefs." It identified four objectives along the same lines of what the Attorney-General identified as the areas of focus of CVE strategy in the previous year.

The UK's updated counter-terrorism strategy, adopted in March 2009 and entitled 'Contest two', had its four strands as: prevent, pursue, protect and prepare. Australia's 'resilience' is the equivalent of the UK's (much-discredited) 'prevent'.

The Counter-Terrorism White Paper also announced the creation of the Counter Terrorism Control Centre (CTCC). The CTCC was established in October 2010 to set and manage counter-terrorism priorities, identify intelligence requirements, and ensure that the processes of collecting and distributing counter-terrorism information are harmonised. It is located within ASIO and headed by a senior ASIO officer, having senior level representation from ASIS, the AFP, the ASD and AGIO.

The National Security Legislation Amendment Act was also passed in 2010. It represented the first significant legislative changes to the anti-terrorism laws. However, on the whole, the changes were cosmetic. The definition of a 'terrorist act' was expanded to include psychological harm; police search powers were extended; a new 'terrorism hoax offence' was introduced; the offence of sedition was renamed 'urging violence' and expanded to include urging force or violence against an individual.

2011 saw the start of the Building Community Resilience (BCR) program whereby large grants of up to \$100,000 were made available to community organisations to counter extremism. The program aims to "encourage and empower communities and individuals to resist or disengage from intolerant and radical ideologies." This was one of the multiple measures indicating the renewed focus on 'counter violent extremism'.

The BCR took over from where the NAP stopped in July 2010. Since 2005, over \$8 million have been spent on such programs overall. Under the National Action Plan (NAP) \$4.1 million were used from 2005-2010 on about 56 community projects. Under the Building Community Resilience (BCR) program \$4.2 million have already been spent since 2011 till now on about 50 projects. Many of these projects are run by Muslim community organisations and the vast majority of them target Muslims.

In October 2011, the Attorney-General's Department launched the Resilient Communities website as an online means to "provide information on what communities and the Government are doing to build resilient communities that take action against violent extremism."

The National Imams Consultative Forum (NICF) was established in late 2012, highlighting the Government's desire to use Imams for its agenda. The NICF is an initiative of the National Centre of Excellence for Islamic Studies (NCEIS) in partnership with the Australian National Imams Council (ANIC), as "a basis for specially trained and committed Imams from across Australia that can be used in a variety of countering violent extremism (CVE) capacities."

It is made up of over 20 Imams from every state who intend to meet in workshops along with government officials to "discuss issues relating to community safety, radicalisation and violent extremism in Australia." Three workshops took place in its first year, all at the University of Melbourne, addressed by academics, Imams and government and law enforcement officials. The fourth workshop is scheduled to be held this month, on 23-24 November.

Australia's first National Security Strategy was launched by Julia Gillard in January 2013, building on the National Security Statement of 2008. It provided an overarching framework for national security efforts and set priorities for the next five years. It comprised of no substantive change to the national security policy or approach except to emphasise regional partnerships and taking account of changes in the Asia Pacific as per the Australia in the Asian Century White Paper that preceded it.

Attorney-General Mark Dreyfus announced the latest round of BCR grants in April 2013 at a visit to Lakemba mosque and the Lebanese Muslim Association. In July, he held a round table with community leaders on countering violent extremism and language used therein in particular.

ASIO's annual report to Parliament for 2012-2103 was tabled in October 2013, claiming that hundreds of Muslims in Australia were advocates of 'violent Islamist ideology'. This gross exaggeration was most probably to substantiate its work and funding but indicates well the continued government focus on, and abuse of, the Muslim community in Australia.

